Film Quarterly

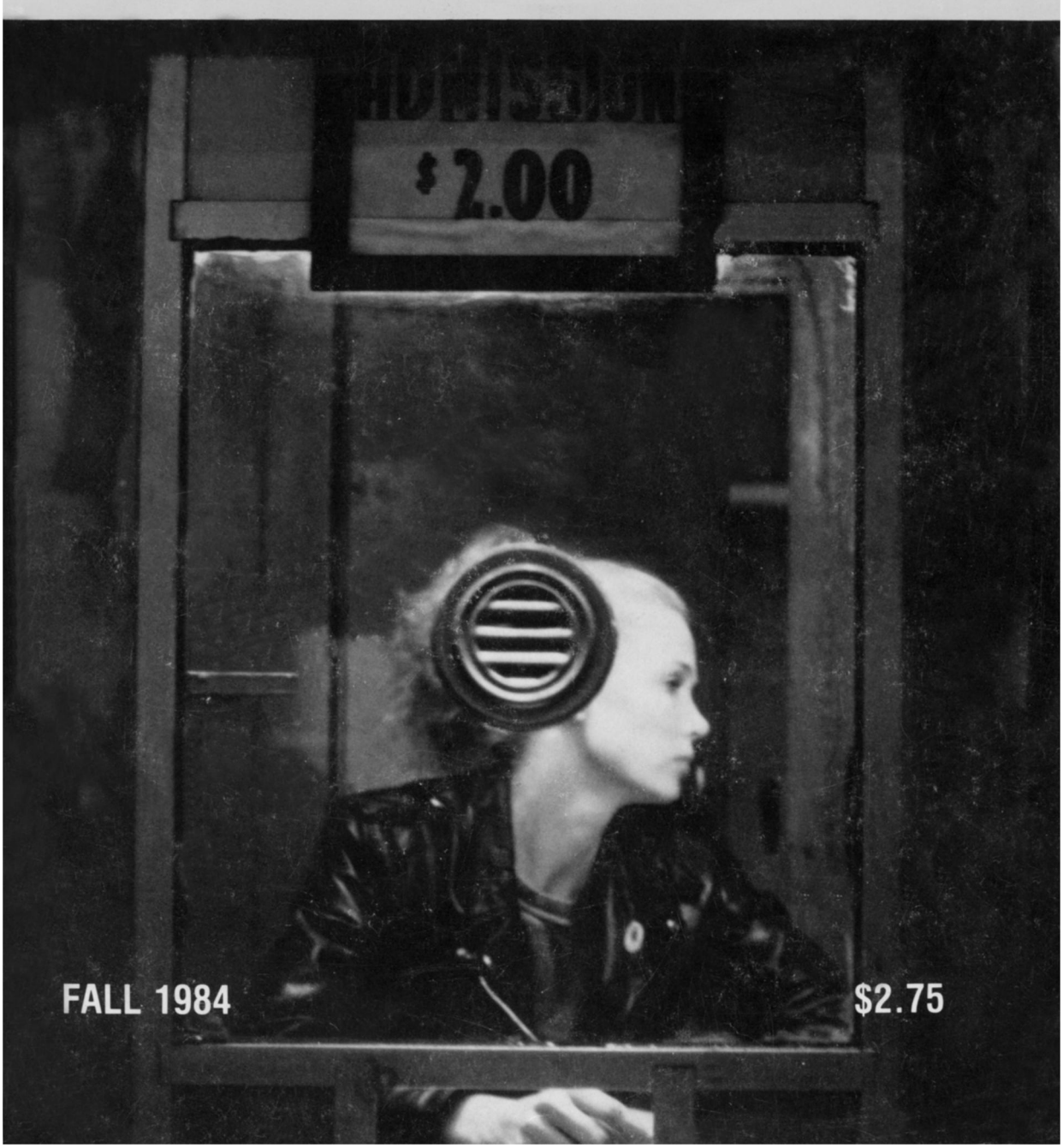
MUSIC VIDEOS

MORE FILM BOOKS

GODARD'S *PASSION*

VARIETY *ZELIG*

SWING SHIFT



FALL 1984

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Rutgers University Press is pleased to announce a new film series. Each volume will include a continuity script, based on the most complete available print of the film, and such additional material as a critical introduction, reviews, interviews, a filmography, and a bibliography. The series aims to provide for students and film enthusiasts, first, accurate texts for study, and second, critical contexts in which to study the texts. The films selected are international, classic and modern; they are not tied to a particular studio, theory of film, or the names of famous writers, better known for their fiction. In addition, the texts will be unique in presenting copious transcriptions of action, images, decor, and soundtrack music where these descriptions enhance comprehension of the films. All of the titles will provide an abundance of stills and frame enlargements from important scenes and, where critical, a list of departures from the original shooting script.

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VOLUME XXXVIII, No. 1 Fall 1984

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THE COVER: Christine at the box office: *Variety* (see review, page 24).

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MARSHA KINDER

Music Video and the Spectator:
TELEVISION, IDEOLOGY AND DREAM

Music video is a protean form that has proven its magnetic power on MTV, a national 24-hour cable station devoted entirely to this programming on a continuous basis. It is now popping up on other cable stations, frequently appearing between movies the way cartoons and newsreels used to punctuate the spaces between features at movie theaters. It is also breaking into commercial television, where as many as 300 programs across the nation are devoted to music videos during carefully chosen hours.

Music video has even found its way into movies, providing the central creative energy for a subgenre launched by *Flashdance*—films that weave loose narratives around hot dance sequences created by montage and that generate fast-selling videos. The connection with film also proved lucrative in Michael Jackson's *Thriller,* the 14-minute video directed by feature film-maker John Landis (*Animal House, American Werewolf in London, Twilight Zone*). According to *Newsweek* (August 6, 1984), the documentary film *Making Michael Jackson's Thriller,* though it's only a spin-off, has already sold 450,000 cassettes, making it the second-best-selling video in history. *Thriller*'s stunning commercial success, extended length and conscious positioning within the horror film genre helped strengthen the link between music video and mainstream film-making. Respected auteurs like Nicholas Roeg, Bob Rafelson, Tobe Hooper and Andy Warhol have entered the field, a trend that challenges the old unidirectional model which assumed *all* directors of commercials and television were fighting their way up from the boob tube to enter the celestial art of Cinema. Now, according to Warhol, "Everyone wants to make music videos!"[1]

What is the significance of this quicksilver phenomenon? Depending on which mass media reports you read, music video is a new means of extending the unique aesthetic possibilities of the avant-garde formerly restricted to independent film-making and video art, a new combination of music and images that redefines audiovisual relations in the mass media, a new means of marketing records and tapes that is saving the pop music industry, or a new source of violent sexist sadomasochistic images infecting the minds of our children.

While all of these perspectives may have validity, the underlying phenomenon that makes them all possible has been ignored: music video seems to be forging new codes of spectator relations, or more accurately, it is making the codes that were already operative in television more transparent. MTV provides a model that highlights through exaggeration the unique aspects of television, particularly those that distinguish the medium from cinema, and that have highly significant implications on two registers—television's relation to ideology and its relation to dream.

In the discussion of music video that follows, there will be no attempt to establish a canon or to create a pantheon of auteurs—projects that are already well under way.[2] I will not be examining the best works that the genre has produced, many of which have never been or are no longer being aired on MTV but are available in video stores and private collections. (Most songs have an even shorter life on MTV than they do on Top 40 radio stations.) Since I will be exploring MTV programming as a model of commercial television, I will limit my discussion to rock video, the station's main staple, though other forms of pop music such as jazz have also entered the field, and I will restrict my examples to those video clips being broadcast at the time I was writing this essay, choosing them almost at random to illustrate what is typical rather than what is most powerful aesthetically.

STILL COURTESY EPIC RECORDS/CBS

Presence/Absence of the Visual Image

One of the most compelling aspects of rock video is its power to evoke specific visual images in the mind of the spectator every time one hears the music with which they have been juxtaposed on television. The experience of having watched and listened to a particular video clip on television establishes these connections in the brain circuitry; by repeating the experience very frequently within a short period of time (a situation guaranteed by the repetitive structure of MTV), the spectator strengthens these associations in the brain. Thus later when the spectator hears the song on the radio or in a different context in which the visuals are absent, the presence of the music is likely to draw these images from memory, accompanied by the desire to see them again. This process follows the basic patterns of conditioning well established in the field of cognitive learning.

In rock video it is not merely a matter of whether we hear and see the performer (as we do in live performance at a concert or nightclub). In many rock video clips the visuals do not focus *primarily* on the performer in the act of performing; those that do, risk appearing regressive for they are reverting to conventions used in rock film documentaries from the sixties and seventies like *Monterey Pop* and *Woodstock*. In most rock videos what we do see is a chain of disparate images, which may involve the musical performers, but which stress discontinuities in space and time—a structure that resembles the form of dreams. Though the pulsing kinetic rhythms of the visual montage are invariably accentuated by the musical beat, the continuous flow of the music and lyrics also imposes a unifying identity (sometimes augmented by a narrative component in the lyrics and/or visuals) onto the discontinuous visual track, distinguishing it from the chains of similar images in the video clips that precede and follow this particular musical text.

This structure insures that the visuals will be the primary source of pleasure, for it is the lush visual track that will be withdrawn, withheld or suspended, when the spectator is no longer watching television but *only listening* to the song on the radio or stereo. The reverse situation—the presence of the visuals and the absence of the audio—is not built into the system; it can be achieved only through technical breakdown or through the spectator's

intervention (turning off the sound while watching the images). Pioneer plays with this irony in one of its commercials for laser disc players by having blind singer Ray Charles deliver their slogan: "Video for those who really care about audio." This music video structure tends to subordinate the audio component of television by linking it with radio. Although some critics have argued that this linkage enables TV sound to act as a cue that draws the spectator's attention to certain video images, radio still remains the superseded medium which lacks the perceptual richness that television shares with cinema. In all television the visual component is privileged over the audio—a condition which is over-determined by historical, cultural and psychological factors[3] and which is revealed in the very term used for TV spectators, *viewers.*

The complex structure of the visual chain of images in most rock videos makes the reliance on memory and the value of repeated viewings all the more essential. If a person hears the song first before seeing the video clip that combines sound and image, the complexity of the visual form makes it virtually impossible for this listener to predict how the video would look. The situation is very different from the way it was in the sixties or seventies when a rock fan might buy a new album or audio tape by the Stones and then while listening, sit back and imagine how Jagger might look while performing this particular number.[4] It probably would have been even more likely for such a listener to place her- or himself in an imaginary setting and fantasize erotic behavior evoked by the lyrics, or to use the music as a sound track for actual physical acts (sex, dancing, exercise, or what you will). In such instances, the very absence of the live performers (represented only by still images on album covers, which frequently featured suggestive scenes or fetishes instead of the performers) invited the listener to create a waking fantasy. In those days the rock fan was expected to generate his or her own images; the visual component of the fantasies elicited by pop music were not totally prefabricated.

I don't mean to imply that music video is incapable of stimulating viewers to dream up their own chains of images, perhaps in a different style and with new combinations. Yet the remembering of images one has already seen seems an essential first step—a process I have seen prepubescent and teenage viewers transform into a game of Who can remember the most details? This goal of memory retrieval or replication is fostered by some of the performers. When recently interviewed by a video jockey on MTV, Roger Waters assured his fans that those coming to his latest live concert would not be disappointed when they *heard* "5:05 AM, The Pros and Cons of Hitchhiking," for they would be *seeing* visual effects that equalled those they had seen in the video clip. Most concert promotions currently being aired on MTV stress the extravagance of the visual spectacle as much as the music—spectacle designed to match what is being seen on television.

Music video challenges the listener to play a hip *fort/da* game of Can you recall the absent visuals? Can you return to being a viewer and experiencing the original plenitude of sight and sound? This game is designed to drive all players back to the TV set to compulsively consume those prefabricated fantasy images on MTV (or wherever they can be found), knowing that all popular favorites will be repeated but rarely being able to predict more than a half hour in advance the precise time that any particular clip will be aired. (Didn't the followers of Pavlov and Skinner teach us that inconsistent patterns of reinforcement would intensify and prolong the compulsive repetition of the desired behavior?)

Performance, Narrative and Dreamlike Visuals

Thus far I have been talking as if all music videos had equal visual complexity and were all characterized by one style, neither of which is the case. Yet virtually all rock videos *are* comprised of three distinct components, which are combined with different emphases to create considerable variety within the form. First, the performance of the singer or group identifies the form with the musical genre and with the historic pop tradition of recording live performances on tape or film. Second, a simple or complex narrative carried by the lyrics and / or visual images, and sometimes featuring a guest star, turns the video into a minifilm with specific generic identification

(e.g., horror, gangster film, screwball comedy, western, *noir,* melodrama, women's picture), making the visuals easier to remember and providing the spectator with a prefabricated daydream with varying degrees of space left for personal elaborations. Third, a series of incongruous visual images stressing spatial and temporal dislocations makes rock video closely resemble dreams—the primary medium that weaves loose narratives out of chains of incoherent images and that, despite its selective audio component, is predominantly a visual experience. Both performance and narrative work toward coherence, distinguishing the text from other rock video clips; in contrast, the dreamlike visuals work toward decentering and dissolution, revealing the deep structure of all television as an endless chain of images whose configuration into any structural unity or text is only a temporary, illusory byproduct of secondary revision.

The musical performance always dominates the audio, but varies in the degree to which it controls or is even present in the visuals. The narrative element is variable both on the audio and visual registers, sometimes dominating one or both, other times virtually absent except for the tendency of the human brain to read a story into any series of consecutive images, particularly when accompanied by words. The chain of incongruous images is restricted primarily to the visuals, varying in the quantity and pacing of the spatial and temporal dislocations and in the degree to which special effects are employed, but at least minimally present in the form of rapid montage which is featured in virtually all rock videos and also characteristic of commercials. While many commentators have called these dreamlike visuals *surreal,* it is important to distinguish them from the historical surrealism represented in film by Buñuel, a modernist movement which used dream rhetoric as a radical strategy to undermine the power of bourgeois ideology, particularly as it was manifest in the fine arts. In contrast, this postmodernist pop surrealism uses dream images to cultivate a narcissism that promotes our submission to bourgeois consumerism.

Music video has adopted quite consciously the visual conventions of the TV commercial, which has provided many talented directors (like Tim Newman and Bob Giraldi) for the new form. When viewing MTV, it is difficult to distinguish the video clips from the commercials because of close similarities in visual style, background music and short format. The same is true for the MTV news, which usually features three short items promoting commercial ventures, and for the station ID's, which sometimes include brief excerpts from clips of the most famous video stars—all presented in fast montage. These conventions from the commercial have been adopted because of their ability to capture and hold the spectator's attention, which is fundamental to their selling power. Research has shown that this kind of fast-paced visual style holds the attention even of the pre-school viewer, which is one of the reasons why it has been incorporated into kiddie shows like "Sesame Street" and why rock video has such an hypnotic effect on young children. The fast pace of MTV's programming might also be connected with the rise of cocaine as the dominant drug in pop culture in place of acid and grass. In Michael Jackson's Pepsi generation full of Pepper-uppers, Coke is it.

Like all television, the primary function of MTV's rock video is to sell products. While this goal is explicit in the TV commercial and fairly visible on MTV, it is disguised in most conventional programming on commercial television. Nick Browne has argued that while the television program is presented as the primary text and the commercials that temporarily interrupt it as secondary, the opposite is true, for the main function of the program is to provide a suitable environment for the commercial message. The actual television text is "a 'supertext' that consists of the particular program and all the introductory and interstitial materials—chiefly announcements and ads . . ." and "advertising . . . the central mediating discursive institution."[5] MTV exposes the "supertext" by erasing the illusory boundaries within its continuous flow of uniform programming and reveals the central mediating position of advertising by adopting its formal conventions as the dominant stylistic. In fact, *everything* on MTV is a commercial—advertising spots, news, station ID's, interviews, and especially music video clips.

Whereas other TV stations usually have to pay for the programs which the commercials

SAMPLE PROGRAMMING ON MTV

Monitored in Los Angeles

Sunday, July 15, 1984, 12 noon–1 pm

* = music videos

12:00 MTV station ID, leading into voice-over of VJ Mark Goodman announcing what clips and news items will be featured in the next half hour.

*Scorpions: "Still Loving You." Performance ruptured by fragmented visuals and shifts of scene.

12:05 *Bette Midler: "Beast of Burden." Screwball comedy narrative co-starring Mick Jagger, incorporating live performance by Midler, which Jagger eventually joins.

12:10 MTV promotion for stereo hook-up.

Commercial for Thunderbird cars, with fast montage.

Commercial for Little Steven album, including shots of live performance and concert schedule (usually included as news items).

Commercial for Reese's Pieces candy, featuring comic narrative with E.T. lookalike.

*Don Hartman (performance by the Sorels): "I Can Dream About You." Stage performance by black male singers, the Sorels, is framed by and intercut with romantic narrative about a white couple.

12:15 *The Alan Parsons Project: "Prime Time." Nightmare horror narrative featuring mannequins, some of whom come alive through the magic of special effects. We never see the singer or musicians performing.

12:20 VJ Mark Goodman on screen, comments on clips just aired and then presents the news, including 3 items all promoting commercial ventures:

Plasmatics singer Wendy O has done her first solo album; VJ presents a brief interview shown on a TV monitor.

Grace Jones, who made her screen debut in the new Conan film now playing in theaters, will have a new role in the next James Bond movie.

Judas Priest concert dates.

Commercial for the new Carpenters Album. The surviving brother talks about his dead sister Karen, who appears in brief excerpts singing their greatest hits.

12:25 *Stray Cats: "Stray Cats Strut." Comic narrative featuring the group performing in an alley, drawing female reactions from a real live puss, two groupies, and an old bitchy neighbor who throws things at them and then switches channels on her TV set but keeps getting their performance or an animated cartoon featuring other stray cats.

*Elton John: "Sad Songs (Say So Much)." Narrative involving another street performance, but featuring a catalogue of listeners in a variety of contexts hearing those sad songs on radio, TV, stereo, etc., matched by multiple images of Elton performing in a variety of hats and styles.

12:30 MTV station ID

*Ratt: "Round and Round." Narrative that parodies the horror film, featuring an elegant formal dinner where two of the guests are played by Milton Berle. The dinner is disrupted by rock performers in the attic who transform one beautiful guest and the butler, not into vampires or werewolves, but punk groupies.

12:35 *Ultravox: "Vienna." Surreal visual images disguise narrative intrigue, as the lyrics keep telling us "this means nothing to me."

12:40 MTV promotion for appearance of Christine McVie.

Commercial for Mountain Dew soft drinks, wtih fast montage.

Commercial for Novabeam television, a large screen. "Once you see it, you'll never be able to watch a small screen again."

Commercial for Soft 'n Dri deodorant, featuring a narrative about a young black female newscaster making her TV debut.

MTV station ID

12:45 *Police: "Wrapped Around Your Finger." Performance disrupted by dreamlike visuals involving hundreds of long candles, constant camera movement with deep focus, cross dissolves, dynamic montage, and a flicker effect.

*Rick Springfield: "Don't Walk Away." Romantic narrative with dreamlike visuals that follow the singer to his apartment, where paintings provide settings for a series of inset narratives that tell the same story of a sad parting in a variety of scenes associated with different genres.

12:50 VJ Mark Goodman on screen to promote clips by Sam Hagar and Huey Lewis which will debut on MTV.

Commercial for Chrysler Laser XE—with fast montage.

Commercial for Fabergé body spray—with fast montage.

Commercial for "Electric Dreams," a new movie directed by the man who directed

	Michael Jackson's "Billy Jean" video (in some of the other commercials for this same movie we are told that it features music by the Culture Club and other MTV video stars).
	Commercial for Scope mouthwash, with series of brief narratives.
	MTV station ID—featuring brief excerpts from clips of some of the most famous video rock stars like Michael Jackson, Boy George, Billy Idol, etc.
12:55	*Van Halen: "Panama." Performance ruptured by fragmented visuals and brief scenes featuring bizarre or outrageous images, but which still tend to illustrate the lyrics.
1:00	MTV station ID, with voice over of VJ Mark Goodman announcing the clips that will be aired during the next half hour.

interrupt, MTV has no such overhead. No wonder their station ID's are so varied and spectacular; they are practically the only "programs" that MTV produces. This situation highlights the main business of every TV station—not to generate programs, but to deliver viewers (at the lowest cost per thousand) to advertisers who pay both for the commercials and for the time it takes to air them. The music industry is happy to provide the video clips as free programming for MTV because the air time for these thinly disguised commercials is also free. In this sweet business arrangement, as long as the viewers keep watching and buying, both station and advertiser not only profit, but get something for nothing.

All three components of rock video serve consumerist goals. The performance motivates the spectator specifically to buy a particular album on which the featured song is recorded. The name of the group, song, album, and record company appear at the beginning and end of every clip every time it is aired, implying that the spectator should be eager to note this information in order to facilitate the anticipated purchase.[6] More generally, the performance is also selling the performers, whose future commercial ventures (concerts, nightclub dates, and future recordings) the spectator will be expected to support. Both the narrative and dreamlike visuals motivate the spectator specifically to buy, not just the album, but the video itself. If the viewer has no playback equipment, then he or she is motivated to purchase a VCR in order to make the purchase or rental of the video more feasible. The narrative and the visuals also strengthen the viewer's motivation to consume all products affiliated with the performers (other albums, tickets for live performances, T-shirts and toys that display their name or image, soft drinks or other products that carry their endorsement). It is the narrative and dreamlike visuals, with their direct connection to private fantasy, that best define the unique features of rock video, distinguishing it from previous means of marketing pop music and supporting the infrastructure that insures the commercial success of the form.

At this point, it might be useful to examine some specific rock video clips to show the interaction among the three components.

Videos Dominated by Performance

Performance dominates both the sound and image of many video clips, but usually with the intervention of a subordinate narrative or a visual fragmentation that disrupts the temporal and/or spatial unity. In those instances where such disruption is absent or minimal, as in the Pretenders' "It's a Thin Line between Love and Hate," the video seems oldfashioned and tedious. This judgment is supported by the fact that some vintage songs have been released with historic footage of a live concert, granting a place on MTV to dead veterans like Jim Morrison. In such cases, the excitement is generated by the rarity of seeing the "living" record of a great performer who was ahead of his time but will be giving no more live concerts. But for live performers who want to be on the cutting edge, something else is needed.

In White Snake's "Slow 'n Easy," the sensuous, extravagant performance of the singers is periodically interrupted by inserts of a two-lane blacktop and by glimpses of a sexy blonde wearing pearls tightened around her throat. Presumably the "superstitious woman" mentioned in the lyrics, the blonde appears in scenes that take place off stage—as if she is the woman the singer has in mind while performing this song. Yet in some shots she is positioned as a spectator, as if the masochism of her response matches or is evoked by the aggression in the performance. We see a close-up of her throat that reveals the bruises made by the pearls, and a long shot of her sit-

ting in her flashy car deciding whether to pick up the male singer (who stands next to a smashed vehicle on a deserted highway) and then speeding away leaving him stranded in the middle of the road. These suggestive shots and lyrics encourage the spectator to construct a sadomasochistic narrative in which either the man or the woman is bound to be the object of desire and revenge. The crosscutting between the narrative and the performance gradually accelerates in pace, as do the tempo of the music and the cutting rhythm with which the performance is fragmented into close-ups of fetishistic details, an acceleration that renders the song title ironic. Although this video clip is dominated by performance, the fast pace of the montage makes it anything but easy to recall the chain of visual images that accompany the music.

In many videos the performance itself serves as the main narrative event, whose spatial unity is broken by the disjunctive visuals—either through special effects as in "Mental Hopscotch" by the Missing Persons or by shifts in setting as in Nena's "99 Luftballoons." The lyrics in such video clips frequently comment reflexively on the cognitive process that the visual style demands of the spectator (mental hopscotch) or on the direct connection with dreams ("99 dreams I have had, everyone a red balloon"). In "The Heart of Rock 'n Roll" the performance of Huey Lewis and the News is fragmented spatially, as the settings for the singing shift from New York to LA, and to other stops on the tour, and from concert halls, to nightclubs, to the streets; and also temporally, as their performance is situated within the history of rock 'n roll. The inserts of Elvis Presley and other historical precursors that are intercut with present footage of Lewis and the News, are echoed in the contrasting dance styles of different eras as well as in the two historical TV formats of color and black-and-white, between which the visuals constantly alternate. In this video, the self-reflexive visuals narrativize the performance by positioning within it the history of pop music and of television.

Videos Dominated by Narrative

At its most extreme, narrative can dominate both words and images—making the latter illustrate the former and moving the song toward ballad and the visuals toward mini-film, as in the case of Tony Carey's "A Fine, Fine Day." Opening with gritty black-and-white images before shifting to color and relying heavily on flashbacks, this mini-gangster film is presented with low mimetic realism, except for the singing of the narrator (who tells the story of his father released from prison and rubbed out by gangsters all on one fine day) and by the incongruity, at a key dramatic moment, of having the Mafia boss mouth Carey's words—an effect which is comically deflating, to say the least.

Far more typical is the use of a thin narrative line, witty in tone, which provides the basic situation for an erotic fantasy on which the spectator can elaborate according to his/her sexual tastes. The holes in the plot are usually filled by the lush visuals—the exotic settings, costumes, hair styles and make-up as well as the fast cutting and effects. The narrative line makes these visuals and their sequential arrangement easier to remember, for the order appears to make sense rather than being random. Instead of performing on stage, the singer plays a dramatic role within the story, which includes recitativo or a singing narration.

As a case in point, Van Stephenson presents an explicit masochistic fantasy which transforms a hair stylist into a "Modern Day Delilah." In a witty development of the conceit, the hair-styling equipment becomes elaborate sexual paraphernalia, the beautician herself a feline predator with leonine tresses, and Stephenson the willing Samson. Despite the extravagance of the visuals, they are still limited to illustrating the lyrics. Though it is possible to identify either with Samson or Delilah in this fantasy, it is clearly the male masochist who controls the clip. While watching this video, the spectator is more likely to savor the wit at an emotional distance, storing the images for reprocessing in private fantasies to come.

Eddy Grant's "Romancing the Stone" pits sound against image to design a narrative (the raw material for a romantic daydream) that can be read from multiple points of view. While Grant, a black reggae singer, dominates the sound with his performance, the visuals focus on a white female magazine photographer working on chic shots so that she can afford to fly back to her romance-starved, machete

wielding, hip-swinging third world lover in vacation land. Each is a subject of the other's art and fantasies: from his humble shack, he sings to her about how much he misses her; in her urban studio his photograph is displayed like a trophy. He sends her a post card that carries, not only the refrain from his lyrics, but also his moving image carefully packaged and framed. Later it appears in her studio next to his photograph—a moving audiovisual reminder, like a video clip displayed on an Advent, of his talent and appeal and a strong incentive for her to buy a plane ticket as soon as possible (in fact, her paycheck is magically transformed into a ticket by means of a dissolve). Depending on whether one focuses on the music or the photography, the fantasy could be interpreted as a product either of the man or the woman, the black or the white, the colonized Third World which provides the raw talent and lush natural resources or the prosperous colonizer who develops and consumes them. Though at first we only hear him and see her, the visuals intercut between the white woman working in the city (coping with traffic and sexism) and the black man waiting in the tropics—a reversal of traditional sex roles, but a demystification of political-economic realities, particularly in the music industry (where black music is produced, packaged and sold by whites) and in the movies (where "Romancing the Stone" is the title song of a film that uses the third world as a background for romantic adventures of whites, a typical ploy of Hollywood thrillers). While the surface romance may evoke a daring fantasy of miscegenation and sexual reversals, the underlying politics tell the same old story of commercial exploitation. In this mini-romance, the contrapuntal use of sound and image reveals an ideological subtext; yet by allowing more possibilities for spectator identification, it enhances rather than subverts the marketing strategy of selling reggae to American consumers.

Videos Dominated by Dreamlike Visuals

Those rock videos that are dominated by dreamlike visuals seem to make the richest use of the medium—a judgment widely held by reviewers writing for pop magazines devoted to the art (*Record, Cream, Video, Optical Music,* etc.). Some video clips like Duran Duran's "Reflex," Peter Gabriel's "Shock the Monkey," and Depeche Mode's "Everything Counts" create effects that evoke works by some of the most advanced independent film-makers, such as the rich multilayered imagery of Pat O'Neill. Such connections could presumably cultivate a more receptive audience for independent films, but it's also possible for those avant-garde conventions (that extend backward to Surrealism and Dada) to become co-opted.

The video clips that I find most revealing are those that comment self-reflexively on how rock video works, particularly in its relation to the spectator's private fantasies and dreams. Though we have already noted this tendency in performance-dominated videos like "Mental Hopscotch," "99 Luftballoons" and "The Heart of Rock 'n Roll" and in the narrative-centered "Romancing the Stone," it tends to be developed more fully in clips dominated by visuals and in those that make a balanced use of all three components.

One scene from Duran Duran's "Reflex" is particularly emblematic. We watch an audience watching a movie screen on which appears a giant wave. When it crashes, it breaks free from the screen and invades the audience's space, completely engulfing the spectators. This tidal wave, an archetype from nightmares and anxiety dreams, evokes rock video, whose images carried by the air waves break out of the television set to penetrate the private space of our consciousness and lives.

The process of internalizing media images from movies and television and combining them with private memories to generate new fantasies and dreams is dramatized in Cyndi Lauper's "Time after Time"—a process that is facilitated by repeated exposure, as the song title implies. The clip opens with Cyndi watching a Bette Davis movie on television while her lover sleeps beside her. Certain images from this woman's picture evoke personal associations from the singer's past, which are recombined to form a romantic fantasy that sharply contrasts in visual style and tone with the banal setting of the framing situation.

This same process—involving movies, fantasies and dreams, all mediated through video —is elaborated in Roger Waters's "5:01 AM, The Pros and Cons of Hitchhiking." Opening with movie images from *Shane,* the clip then

turns to shots of a woman cruising in a convertible, picking up a handsome blonde hitchhiker. The lyrics reveals that she is an Encino housewife pursuing a romantic fantasy—one that was repressed in *Shane* (where the pioneer housewife never acted on her sexual attraction to the roving gunfighter played by blond Alan Ladd) but liberated in *The Wild One* (a film that is evoked in the clip, not through authentic footage, but through reprocessed lookalike images and whose rolling stone hero, clad in black leather, is associated with Jack Palance, the gunfighter villain whom we see blown away in one of the excerpts from *Shane*). Again, as in "Romancing the Stone," we are presented with a dual point of view—the male singer telling the story and the Encino housewife whose fantasies seem to control the visuals. Yet as the clip progresses, other dreamlike visuals disrupt the narrative—particularly images of a man flying across a cloudy sky. The dual perspective is revealed in the ending when we see a man and a woman asleep in bed, where they have both been reprocessing media images in their respective dreams.

Omnipresence of the Spectator

This self-reflexive attention to the viewing process foregrounds another characteristic of television that is exaggerated on MTV—the omnipresence of the spectator. One video clip that plays with this dimension is "Tell Her About It," where performer Billy Joel is introduced by Ed Sullivan (really an impersonator) for his historic TV debut on "The Toast of the Town" while Rodney Dangerfield (the real comedian in a guest appearance) waits in the wings. The spectator is depicted not only through the live audience in the theater where Joel is singing, but also through diverse TV viewers who watch (or don't watch) his performance in a variety of period contexts, which provide settings for mininarratives eventually involving Joel, whose live presence (like Duran Duran's tidal wave) invades their life space: a neighborhood bar, a family room, a sorority house, a TV studio, and even a Soviet spaceship. In contrast to "The Heart of Rock 'n Roll," here it is the TV spectator rather than the performer whose living continuity with the historic past is dramatized.

Through constant reminders that, at any moment of broadcasting, someone is watching, in television, unlike cinema, the spectator is made to seem omnipresent.[7] This sense is particularly strong in live television, where the omnipresence of the spectator is highlighted as a distinguishing feature of primary value. Live television departs from the basic film-making model (film crew and actors shooting on a closed set) by frequently granting a place for the spectator in the studio or on camera, as we see in game shows and comedy-variety programs like "The Johnny Carson Show" and "Saturday Night Live." The "live" component survives even in the reruns where we viewers are made to feel that we belong to a live audience responding to living legends like John Belushi. As with the historical footage of live concerts on MTV, "live" is redefined; no longer restricted to the recording or transmission, it becomes associated with whatever occupies the present consciousness of the spectator. It's as if by watching television, the spectator gains the divine power of granting life to whoever or whatever appears on screen. The viewer can extend the TV life of Phil Donahue and Joan Collins or kill them off in a season. Of course, it's really the networks and advertisers that decide what's on the screen, but the audience is constantly told that it is their viewing (and buying) habits that control those decisions.

This feeling of the spectator's omnipresence is cultivated even on shows that are taped or filmed. Canned laughter is used on situation comedy series, and viewers are directly addressed in the second person in commercials, on news and sports shows, on children's programs like "Sesame Street" and "Nickelodeon," and by virtually all video jockeys on MTV.

Instead of stressing the changeovers from one VJ to another, which would accentuate them as TV personalities and create the effect of separate programs (as occurs on some music radio stations), MTV makes the transitions subtle. The name of the next VJ is announced along with the upcoming performers and news for the next half hour segment. Sometimes the new VJ is first heard in a voice-over at the end of a station ID before being seen on screen. Other times both VJ's chat together on camera at the end of the connecting station break. Despite the diversity in their age, sex, personality and style, it's as if the main function of

these VJ's, who also double as newscasters, is to maintain a continuous live presence that creates the illusion of an on-going dialogue with the audience. On MTV the omnipresence of the VJ helps to strengthen the omnipresence of the spectator.

When an audience is seen, heard or addressed on screen, it signifies for the individual spectator both the object of identification and the Other with whom he or she is temporarily bonded. The TV spectator has a dual role: first, as an individual viewer/listener absorbing images and sounds into one's own consciousness and memory, usually in the privacy of one's own home or bed; and second, as a member of a mass audience or community (McLuhan's "global village") who share common associations, desires and ideological assumptions. In unifying private and public identities, this dual role facilitates the integrated functioning of two complementary actions—both of which are well illustrated in the specific video clips already discussed: (1) the internalizing of TV images into one's own fantasy life, incorporating them into a private reservoir of dream images; (2) the positioning of the spectator in the public marketplace where one becomes an active consumer purchasing products one has been trained by television to desire, thereby contributing to the capitalist economy. Because of advertising's control over television, the private action is made to serve the public goal of internalizing consumerist desires. Nowhere is this co-option more apparent than on MTV.

Presence/Absence of the TV Receiver

Since the TV spectator appears omnipresent, it is the presence or absence of the TV set, the basic receiving apparatus, that is all important. As a receiver, the TV set functions for the spectator in a dual capacity: both as an object of desire and as an object of identification. If you don't have one, you are left out of the community. If you don't have one, your dreams, fantasies and life will be impoverished. If you don't have one, you won't recognize the names and faces of culture heroes that populate mass-circulation magazines like *People* and *Star* and that pop up in conversations. In order to enter the mass culture and its marketing system, you must invest in this basic equipment that promises, not merely temporary admittance to another world, but a dramatic change in you and your world forever. Like buying a Barbie doll, the purchase of a TV set begets other purchases. Once you own and become the basic receiver, you are trained to desire everything it has to offer—as big a screen as possible, color as well as black-and-white, a stereo hook-up, remote control, all of the commercial, PBS and cable stations available, a VCR, and eventually 3-D, high definition and digital television. As in the automotive industry, obsolescence and rapid technological improvement are made to seem inevitable.

Once you possess a TV set, you have unlimited access to the images and sounds it receives. Yet the programming structure with its varied repetitions is designed to create a withholding or suspension that increases your viewing time by intensifying desire. You find yourself waiting for your favorite clip on MTV, waiting for a particular movie to appear on cable or commercial stations, waiting for the particular guest you want to see on the Johnny Carson show, waiting for the sports or weather or whatever news feature will reveal the information you seek, waiting for an instant replay of a dramatic moment in sports, waiting for the reruns of a show that you missed, waiting for the next episode in the soap or miniseries you're faithfully following, waiting for the cable station to reach your neighborhood, or even waiting for your favorite commercial ("Where's the beef?") to explicitly articulate the mechanism of withholding.

When the spectator is not watching television, then he or she, whether out in the world or at home, is still affected by the TV images already internalized. That's when the *fort/da* game really pays off for the sponsoring institution. In the public marketplace, the spectator becomes a consumer looking for the beef —following the cues of point-of-purchase advertising to find and buy the videos, records, T-shirts, soft drinks, and toys promoted on television. In private, the spectator becomes a daydreamer, driving on the freeway listening to songs on the radio or seeing billboards that trigger associations with TV images already programmed into the brain; or by night, a dreamer, reprocessing those TV images into visions of the future. In order to understand

the impact that television can have on dreams, it's necessary to know more about the process of dreaming.

Speculations on the Dream Connection

The most compelling dream models that have emerged from recent neurophysiological and psychological studies suggest that dreams are an evolutionary medium that mediates between biological programming and cultural imprinting. More specifically, the Hobson-McCarley Activation-Synthesis model assumes that the rapid firing of giant cells in the primitive brainstem activates the dream by generating signals within the brain; the rhythm, frequency and duration of the dream are biologically determined.[8] The forebrain then selects images from the memory to "fit" the internally generated random signals; this synthetic process (about which little is known) is probably a function of the right-brain hemisphere (that takes a synthetic or gestalt approach rather than an analytic one to problem solving) and also the site for the psychological level of the dream.[9] The images selected from the memory and recombined in new ways carry the cultural imprinting.

This model has significant implications for the study of television and movies since these two mass media play a key role in the imprinting process, supplementing the dreamer's ordinary experience with thousands of prefabricated moving visual images that are directly absorbed into the cultural dreampool and influencing both the form and content of dream texts. Since these two media have appeared fairly recently in the history of western civilization and since certain nations with advanced technology and imperialist tendencies (most predominantly the USA) have specialized in producing texts that could be exported (even via satellite) to other parts of the world, movies and television have the potential to render dreams more similar all over the planet, a tendency that could have far-reaching political and evolutionary implications. (This issue is brilliantly explored on film by Nicholas Roeg in *The Man Who Fell to Earth* and in literature by Manuel Puig in *Betrayed by Rita Hayworth* and *Kiss of Spider Woman,* which is now being made into a movie.)

The strong impact of the media on dreams is based partly on the phenomenological similarities between dreaming and the viewing of the movies and television: the visual primacy of these experiences; their spatial and temporal discontinuity; the double identity of the spectator as passive voyeur and active participant; the physical comfort and partial immobility of the spectator; the abrupt shift to a different physical and psychic state and to the forgetting of most of the images when the lights go on, the tube goes off, or one awakens from the dream; the two-way process of adaptation, involving the use of dreams as a creative source for artists generating movies and videos and the incorporation of media images into the dreams of viewers; the regressive nature of these fictions which arouse pleasure by fulfilling repressed infantile wishes and needs; the guilty feelings evoked by excessive indulgence in these idle pastimes that substitute for constructive work; and the combination of private and communal roles in these experiences which pass for personal pleasures while serving deeper cultural, ideological or evolutionary goals.

While considerable work has been done on dream and film,[10] very little has been written on dream and television.[11] Yet this relationship is particularly important since dreamers start watching the tube from infancy and since television contributes more images to the cultural dreampool than any other medium. While I am in no way denying the important and unique connections between film and dream, I am interested here in exploring the unique similarities between dream and television.

What is particularly fascinating to me and central to my argument is that the main similarities between dream and television which are *not* shared by film are precisely the same characteristics that are exaggerated on MTV: unlimited access, structural discontinuity, decentering, structural reliance on memory retrieval, live transmission and the omnipresence of the spectator. Most of these characteristics have been widely written about by television historians and theorists; what I am interested in briefly suggesting here is their connection with MTV and dreams.

Unlimited Access

While the frequency and length of dreams are biologically determined (a REM period occurs around every 90 minutes and lasts

about 20 minutes, making the daily average dreamtime approximately 90 minutes), one can increase the amount of time spent dreaming on any given night by extending the hours of sleep or by taking catnaps throughout the day. The amount of time that can be spent daydreaming is, of course, unlimited.

A similar unlimited access is offered, not by cinema, but by "The tube of plenty," forcing the individual spectator to monitor his or her own time devoted to TV viewing. This temptation is dramatized by the 24-hour availability of rock videos on MTV—a feature that is prominently emphasized in all of the promotional spots for the station.

Structural Discontinuity

All TV viewing is marked by a structural discontinuity caused by frequent interruptions by commercials, station breaks and channel-switching. These frequent ruptures are exaggerated on MTV where there is no long program to interrupt, merely a chain of brief segments, all featuring spatial and temporal discontinuity.

Such structural discontinuity evokes a comparison with dreams, which are similarly marked by abrupt scene shifts which Allan Hobson has linked to the bursts of rapid eye movements (REM's) and firings of brain cells that trigger and accompany dreams.

> The rapid eye movements themselves appeared to be generated by the activity of a group of giant cells in the pontine brain stem whose bursting discharge preceded the eye movements during REM sleep. Thus the possibility was raised that specific visual information might actually be generated within the brain. The giant cells not only may drive the eye movements but also may send information into the visual relay nucleus and cortex about the direction and speed of the eye movements. Since this information is highly non-ordered with respect to the external visual world, *scene shifts and dramatic changes in visual dream content might possibly be a function of the generating system* [ital. mine] rather than a censor's attempt to disguise the ideational meaning of 'dream thoughts.'[12]

Both Hobson and Vlada Petrić have compared this structural discontinuity of dreams to cinema: Hobson has charted structural analogies between film devices and dream processes,[13] and Petrić has prescribed the four "most effective cinematic techniques which can enhance the oneiric impact of a film and stimulate the neural activities similar to those occurring during dreaming": "camera movement through space (especially when combined with deep focus"; illogical and paradoxical combinations of objects, characters and settings (while . . . preserving the vivid representation of the photographed world"; "dynamic montage (with concentration on the close-up and subliminal condensation of brief shots"; and "dissolution of spatial and temporal continuity (especially by using 'jump-cuts')."[14] While these techniques can be used to single out certain film styles and auteurs for high praise, they are commonplace in music videos.

Decentering

The structural discontinuity of television creates a constant flow or decentered supertext. Viewers tend to watch television rather than specific programs. This decentering process is carried to an extreme on MTV, where the short commercial is the featured attraction. Though commercially determined, the sequencing of clips has a quality of randomness for the viewer; one sees whatever videos happen to appear on screen while one is watching.

One finds a similar decentering in dreaming, where all dreams on a single night tend to share the same themes, where the dreamer usually remembers specific images or scenes but no clear boundaries around individual dream texts, and where one never knows in advance which dreams or images will appear on the mindscreen. Individual texts of dream and television rarely receive the same degree of artistic status that is ordinarily attributed to film texts—a difference that is more a matter of structural presentation than of artistic merit.

One does not normally find decentering in film. It must be designed as a conscious artistic strategy as in the films of Godard, Makavejev and Alea, usually with the conscious political goal of breaking Hollywood's codes of representation to reveal and oppose the bourgeois ideology they carry. While bourgeois consumerism is also exposed in the decentering processes of television, it is not undermined, but, on the contrary, promoted.

Structural Reliance on Memory Retrieval

The Hobson-McCarley activation-synthesis model posits that while dreaming, the forebrain selects sense images from memory to fit signals about eye movement that are inter-

nally generated by the dreamer's own brain and attempts unsuccessfully to render "the series of shots as a continuous narrative."[15] In elaborating on this model, Hobson frequently uses an analogy with film which sometimes becomes strained:

> During waking, the brain is 'taking pictures': images are accepted at a rate of about 10–20 per second. Owing to the operation of the afferent image-efferent signal comparator process and visual blanking, we perceive the visual world as continuous and the visual field remains constant in space. *Our brains shoot, develop, and edit instantaneously* [ital. mine]. The individual images or the fused image (we know not which) are stored in memory (by unknown mechanisms). They can be called up with difficulty and are weakly perceptible in waking fantasy, but are more easily accessible and vividly perceptible in dreams.[16]

In cinema it is impossible "to shoot, develop, and edit instantaneously," but these mental processes are ordinary practice in live video, which suggests that television might provide a better model than cinema for how the human brain processes images during waking hours.

Earlier I argued that one of the most powerful aspects of music video is its programming of viewers to retrieve specific visual images from memory every time they hear a particular song. Although the triggering sounds of the song usually come from external sources like radio or television (unlike the internally generated signals in dreams), the music video fan has been taught to identify with the external receiving apparatus, so some degree of internalization occurs. This process of retrieving the prefabricated video images from memory may help train viewers to retrieve them more readily during REM sleep. In other words, the structural reliance on memory retrieval shared by MTV and dreams may give these music video images a privileged position within the cultural dreampool. The fact that so many rock video artists cultivate the explicit connection with dreams in their song titles and lyrics, in the visual style and images of their video clips, in their narrative themes and situations, and even in the names of some of the groups (like R.E.M., or the Revolving Paint Dream) suggests that they are seeking this position of power.

Live Transmission and the Omnipresent Spectator

As the most solipsistic of forms, the dream takes place inside the spectator, who is by necessity omnipresent. In the live transmission of dreams, the protean dreamer functions, not only as spectator, but also as writer, director, star, supporting players, location, and technical apparatus.

We have already seen how the television viewer is made to feel omnipresent, particularly through conventions associated with live transmission. It is this very quality that fosters the kind of delusional experiences depicted in Martin Scorsese's film *King of Comedy*[17] and in Hubert Selby's novel *Requiem for a Dream* in which isolated viewers lose the boundaries between television images and their private fantasy projections. In a sense these characters cannibalize the world of television, transforming it into a solipsistic medium like dream.

Unlike movies and dreams which suspend one's normal waking experience by functioning as an alternate reality, television and radio, because they are not totally absorbing, only supplement one's ordinary life. TV viewers frequently do something else while watching. If that other activity happens to be daydreaming, a behavior stimulated by many programs and virtually all commercials, then it is easy for the two imaginary realms to be fused.

MTV tries to capture the best of both worlds. Like radio and ordinary television, it can provide a continuous sound track for partying, dancing, sex, or whatever you happen to be doing and brighten up a room with a flashy visual that can be glanced at whenever you get bored. Yet because of the visual intensity of most video clips, it also strives for the all-absorbing attention a spectator normally devotes to films and dreams. It's the omnipresent spectator, constantly addressed in the second person by the MTV VJ's, who decides which mode of viewing to adopt; but the very presence of both options makes it possible to watch the station for longer stretches at a time.

While exercising its powers of manipulation, MTV makes the spectator feel potent and decisive: he or she is the one who chooses which records, videos and products to buy; who picks which styles and behaviors to imitate; who hums the tunes; who memorizes the visuals; who decides when to look and when to listen; who switches the station on or off. Like all television, it trains the spectator to focus on one's personal powers of choice and reception while ignoring the remote sources

of transmission—the true Remote Control—whose ideological determinants and manipulative strategies remain mystified.

In this examination of MTV as a model for commercial television, I have focused on the medium's relationship both to ideology and to dream. The observations concerning ideology, for the most part, echo or lend support to arguments of others who have been writing on television. But the speculations on the connection with dreams open new paths that warrant further investigation. Perhaps most essential is the interaction between these two registers—the role of dream in internalizing and reprocessing the ideology transmitted through television, a process that is blatantly dramatized in music video on MTV. In the last sixty years we have witnessed how advertising has colonized the public airwaves, first on radio and then on television. Now, through the medium of music video, commercial interests may be extending their sway over the evolutionary medium of dreams.

NOTES

1. *Record* (July 1984), p. 41.

2. See, for example, "Rock Makers," *Video* (July 1984) by Noë Goldwasser, who writes: "The excitement in pop-music video is being generated by a handful of talented filmmakers working in the video-clip medium. People like Russell Mulcahy, Bob Giraldi, Tim Newman, and Tim Pope crank out clips by the hundreds and send them on their infectious way to MTV, *Night Tracks* and the like. This community of directors amounts to a video new wave which is forging the aesthetic basis of music video in much the same way as the French new wave in film—Godard, Resnais, Truffaut—changed our way of looking at movies 20 years ago. . . .

"No one better personifies the music video *auteur* than Tim Pope. . . . He could be called the Jean-Luc Godard of the video age because of his frenetic pace and constantly flowing fountainhead of new visual images. . . . The skinny 28-year old averages about two videos a week in his London studio, and is constantly turning down American groups who come over and throw money at him to make them stars on MTV Stateside." (pp. 81-82)

3. Such causes include the fact that television superseded the audio medium of radio, the neglect of sound and its potentialities both by film-makers and film theorists, and the dominance of vision over all other senses in dreams.

4. One of the few precursors of the new relationship between music and image is the "Memo from T" sequence performed by Mick Jagger in Cammell and Roeg's *Performance* (1970), a visionary rock film that was far ahead of its time.

5. Nick Browne, "The Political Economy of the Television (Super) Text," *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, 9, 3 (Summer 1984).

6. Unlike credits that appear at the end of a film, these data do not inform the viewer whom to credit for the artistic achievement (for example, the name of the director never appears on the rock video clip); the information is provided solely to increase the likelihood of the sale.

7. Of course, there is also a place for the spectator in cinema, as current work on suture, spectators-in-the-text, and self-reflexiveness have shown; one can even find instances of direct address throughout the history of film. Yet these cinematic practices are not so direct as the on-screen presence of TV studio audiences nor as ubiquitous as the use of direct address on television.

8. J. A. Hobson and R. W. McCarley, "The brain as a dream state generator: An Activation-synthesis hypothesis of the dream process," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 134 (1977), 1335-1348. Hobson has also presented this model in relation to film studies in "Film and the Physiology of Dreaming Sleep: the Brain as Camera-Projector," *Dreamworks*, I, 1 (Spring 1980), 9-25; and in his reply to Raymond Durgnat's "The Hunting of the Dream Snark"), *Dreamworks*, II, 1 (Fall 1981), 83-86; and in "Dream Image and Substrate: Bergman's Films and the Psychology of Sleep," in *Film and Dreams: An Approach to Bergman*, ed. by Vlada Petrić (South Salem, N.Y.: Redgrave Publishing Co., 1981), 75-95.

9. An excellent survey of the issue of involvement of the right brain hemisphere is provided by Bruce Kawin in "Right-Hemisphere Processing in Dreams and Films," *Dreamworks*, II, 1 (Fall 1981), 13-17.

10. In the psychoanalytic context, the relationship between film and dream has received considerable attention in the line of discourse derived from Lacan and Metz, most prominently in *The Imaginary Signifier*. Still within the psychoanalytic context, but deviating from Metz on important issues are Robert Eberwein's *Film and the Dream Screen* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1984) and Gay Lynn Studlar's *Visual Pleasure and the Masochistic Aesthetic: The Von Sternberg/Dietrich Paramount Cycle*, Unpub. dissertation, USC, 1984 (a selection from which will appear in Volume II of *Movies and Methods*, ed. by Bill Nichols, U. of Calif. Press). Vlada Petrić's *Film and Dreams: An Approach to Bergman* is a collection of essays, some of which (including Petrić's work and mine) draw on the neurobiological models. This perspective is also represented in several essays (including ones by Petrić, Hobson, Durgnat, Kawin and me) appearing in *Dreamworks*, an interdisciplinary quarterly on the relation between dream and the arts.

11. The two key works on this topic are Peter H. Wood's "Television as Dream" in *Television: The Critical View*, ed. by Horace Newcomb (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 517-535, and "Reality and Television: an Interview with Dr. Edmund Carpenter," *Television Quarterly*, X, 1 (Fall 1972), 42-46. Works that have attempted a three-way comparison usually focus on cinema at the expense of television, arguing that the comparison between film and dream is more interesting (see Raymond Durgnat, "The Hunting of the Dream-Snark," *Dreamworks*, II, 1, Fall 1981, 76-82) or more fruitful in generating formal similarities (see Vlada Petrić's "A Theoretical-Historical Survey: Film and Dreams," in *Film and Dreams*, pp. 1-48.)

12. Hobson, "Film and the Physiology of Dreaming Sleep," p. 14.

13. Ibid., 23.

14. Petrić, "A Theoretical-Historical Survey," p. 23.

15. Hobson, ibid., p. 24.

16. Ibid., 23-24.

17. For an excellent analysis of what this film reveals about television, see Beverle Houston's "*King of Comedy:* A Crisis of Substitution," *Framework*, 24 (Spring 1984), 74-92.

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JAMES ROY MacBEAN

Filming the Inside of His Own Head: Godard's Cerebral Passion

The phrase isn't my own; at least I don't think it is, though I don't know where I might have encountered it. But "filming the inside of his own head" seems to me utterly appropriate as a description of Godard's *Passion*. Godard's point of departure in *Passion* seems to have been images he was carrying around in his head; and he asked himself the question, "Could a film be made starting not from a script or even a 'story' but from *images*?" Significantly, the images Godard had in mind were not 'new' or imagined ones he wished to create (or to 'surprise' and 'capture' from the real world), but rather images which haunted him from the tradition of European oil painting, from Rembrandt, Goya, Delacroix, Ingres and El Greco.

In a sense, these images appear in *Passion* as "found objects," that is, we recognize at certain moments that the filmic images are derived from paintings. Thus, there are two distinct blocs of material in *Passion:* the behind-the-scenes lives of a director, actors and actresses, crew, etc. working on a film-in-progress-within-the-film; and some half-dozen *tableaux vivants* consisting of elaborately constructed movie sets with actors and actresses in period costumes adopting poses which mimic the compositions of famous paintings. These set-pieces constitute the raw material, or scenes-to-be-filmed, of both the film-within-the-film and the film itself.

Thus, images derived from paintings (images deformed slightly, due, no doubt, to their long sojourn in the head of Godard) not only become intrinsic to the film but also could be said to engender it. Or, perhaps we should say that the film becomes intrinsic to *them,* that Godard's *Passion* (as well as his passion) is about "getting into the image," about entering and exploring the space—above all, the emotional space—of the painterly image.

Years ago, back in 1966–67, when making the film *Made in USA,* Godard had experimented with this sense of getting inside the image. "What I wanted," he said at the time, speaking about both *Made in USA* and his short film *Anticipation,* "was to get *inside* the image . . . just the way certain paintings give one the feeling of being within them, *inside* them, or give the impression that they can never be understood as long as the viewer remains outside."[1]

Where Godard's *Made in USA* is concerned, it was indeed a very painterly film. In writing about it when it first came out, I included *Made in USA,* along with Antonioni's *Red Desert,* Agnès Varda's *Le Bonheur* and Bo Widerberg's *Elvira Madigan,* in what I termed the burgeoning genre of "painter's cinema" due to the way so much of the narrative in these films was "told" in color, composition and light.[2] But *Made in USA* also had a fairly strong storyline. It was even based on a novel, a David Goodis thriller of political intrigue and double-agent machinations. What was interesting about *Made in USA,* however, was the way the "text" and the "sub-text" flip-flopped, the way the "story" became inconsequential while the "sub-text" —the Americanization of Europe—asserted itself forcefully in the images.

In *Passion,* however, Godard goes further: there is no "story," or wasn't when he began making the film. But Godard has spoken of the resistance he encountered, from the actors and crew on *Passion,* in trying to create a film that would organize itself around images rather than around a script.

> At certain moments in making a film it's very painful, but there is at least a scenario. On this film,

> what was difficult was that, as is my habit, I didn't have a scenario, but the actors and crew all know me as Mister-No-Scenario, which boils down to the same thing: they say, "We arrive on the set, we wait, Jean-Luc will eventually tell us what to do." So here, I didn't say anything to them; they just stayed there on the set.
>
> But no sooner do I arrive than they ask: "What are we to do?" "What do you want to do?" This quickly became a kind of provocation.[3]

So difficult, and alien, did it seem, apparently, to attempt to work from the images towards the words (if not of a script at least of improvised dialogue) that Godard eventually came to think of his endeavor as a transgression—a "sin"—against some unwritten law of the cinema, something almost grounded in scripture, like "in the beginning was the Word," or "thou shalt not make graven images."

> This is not at all a religious film, but ultimately I think it attains the status of sin. I end up saying to myself, regarding my story of the image, that one never gets to see it as primary, it's always relegated to secondary status. The text, which one sees first . . . as is the case where the unions and the workers are concerned, it's always either the bosses or the unions who speak for the workers, one never sees the workers . . . the text will always come before the image.[4]

In making *Passion,* Godard fought against this so-called "law"; but, in the process, apparently, he ended up fighting with quite a few of the people he wanted to work with him on the film. Even before production started, Godard was turned down, in succession, by four different directors of photography with whom he wanted to work: Vittorio Storaro, Ricardo Aranovich, Henry Lecar, and Henri Alekan. Finally, he turned to his veteran colleague, Raoul Coutard, whom Godard praises as "not, like the others, a colonel of photography but rather a peasant of photography—a humble and very practical man."[5]

With Coutard as director of photography, Godard was finally able to get the production under way, and, more importantly, to get the kind of stunning visual imagery he wanted for this film about images. However, Godard continued to have difficulties with other members of the production team: two directors of production and a decorator quit on him during the shooting. And Godard seems to have alienated just about everyone by turning the tables on them over the issue of how to proceed without a script or even a rough scenario. To demonstrate the difficulty of his predicament, and, also, he claims, to seek their collective help, Godard, in effect, said to everyone: "Look, you want me to put something in writing; what if I in turn ask you to put in writing what *you* can do, what you *want* to do on this particular film?" Of course, nobody took Godard up on this—a fact which rankles him. "I always thought the cinema was an important means of communication," says Godard, playing the innocent, "but the people who work with this

Michel Piccoli and Hanna Schygulla in Godard's PASSION

Jerzy Radziwilowicz directs the film within Godard's PASSION

means don't want to use it."[6]

But how does the finished film of Godard's *Passion* communicate with *us*? Godard may have started with certain paintings in mind and attempted to build the film from these images. A film, however, unfolds in time; and Godard's *Passion* doesn't begin, chronologically, with those paintings. We are not given at the outset the paintings (or rather their cinematic reconstitutions) as raw material from which *we* are asked, or allowed, to build something. Instead, we come upon these images, from time to time (and never images that merely duplicate, in the frame of the movie screen, the precise compositions of the paintings, but always "more" or "less" . . . and "other" . . . than the painted images); and they are imbedded, albeit uneasily, loosely, within a narrative, a "story," or sorts, the very existence of which the images not only predate but also supposedly engender.

The process by which these images from paintings engendered this "story" is suggested, obliquely, by the fact that the "story" of *Passion* is nothing other than the story of the making of a film; and this film-within-the-film is also called *Passion*. So, in a sense, we are retracing the steps of Godard's "Passion," following him on this *via dolorosa* that is the martyrdom of the film-maker, or at least of this singularly self-martyred film-maker.

What we get, then, are bits and pieces, fragments of images, fragments of sounds, stuck together loosely, roughly, *as if provisionally,* as if, at some later date, these individual pieces might be pulled apart, separated out, to be reutilized in some other combination, in some other context. Moreover, the viewer-listener of Godard's *Passion* often has the impression that the very bits and pieces we are seeing and hearing in this film have themselves been ripped out of other Godard films, to be thrown, pell-mell, perhaps at random, into *Passion*. There is the fascination with cars and car accidents from *Weekend;* the ubiquitous pin-ball games from *Vivre sa Vie;* the Lorca quotation from *Pierrot le fou;* and the frequent eruption of push-and-shove fights from *Sauve qui peut* (most of which have a farcical knockabout quality reminiscent of Claude Brasseur's fight with Ernest Metzger's nephew in *Bande à part*). In *Passion* there is an Italian film producer who evokes both Jack Palance from *Le Mépris* and the boss of the salami factory from *Tout va bien*. There is the strangely disquieting "doubling" effect of the pairing film-video from *Numéro deux;* and from that same film there

is also the obsession with anal intercourse. There is the highly charged emotionalism of the combination of fluid camera movements plus music from *One Plus One.* There are several different variations on the image being out of synch with the sound, recalling Godard's myriad experiments with such effects in his "militant" films. And, above all, there is the previously mentioned attempt, reminiscent of what Godard was doing in *Made in USA,* to explore from the *inside* certain paintings, to get "inside" the image.

The problem with *Passion,* however, is that while the explorations of the individual paintings do indeed have an emotional density, the other scenes generally do not. Nor, surprisingly, do they have an *intellectual* density to compensate for their lack of emotive force. Everything in this film, including the star-studded international cast, seems to be reduced to a paraphrase of its previous existence elsewhere—in paintings, in other films. Jerzy Radziwilowicz plays Jerzy, a Polish director making *Passion;* but Jerzy, the actor, seems completely *dépaysé,* disoriented, zombie-like, perhaps even resentful, or sheepish, or both, that a "man of marble" or a "man of iron" should come to this. Isabelle Huppert plays Isabelle, a young factory worker in a small town in Switzerland where the film being directed by Jerzy is being shot. Isabelle brings class-consciousness to the film; but she brings it in the form of a stutter—which, itself, is a kind of paraphrase. Her political commitment has little concrete form other than its verbal *déformation*—a speech impediment.

Hanna Schygulla lends her presence to Godard's *Passion,* playing Hanna, who is married to the factory owner, who herself owns the motel where the film crew is staying, and who gets involved with Jerzy. She also is persuaded to try her hand at acting in the film being made. But in all these little fragments she just seems to be going through the motions. (Her "screen test," shot in video, consists of attempting to "lip-synch" to a recording of a soprano's aria from Fauré's Requiem.) One can't escape having the feeling that Hanna Schygulla, like Jerzy Radziwilowicz, is *dépaysée,* disoriented, out of her element. He is a Wajda character, and she a Fassbinder character: and they find themselves plopped down in the middle of a Godard film—one with no script yet—and it just doesn't go anywhere. To round out the big-name cast, Michel Piccoli plays Michel, the factory owner. He, too, is reduced to a paraphrase, a cliché—the suave, slippery capitalist, sweet-talking (Godard has him play his part with a rose between his lips), yet putting the screws to his workers whenever he can get away with it. Where Isabelle the worker stutters (a sign of working class sincerity, says Godard), Michel the owner has a persistent, hacking cough (a sign of capitalist aggressivity and malevolence, says Godard).

These four characters are put through their paces. Jerzy is sullen, brooding, preoccupied, perhaps with the events in Poland. (This is the conjecture of the other characters in the film.) Isabelle, looking very pale and unisex, with her hair cut short, is also sullen, brooding, resentful (of her status as a worker, as a female workers, as a female, as a "perhaps" virgin). Hanna is her usual self, at least in appearance—luscious, over-ripe, like some exotic fruit—and one senses in her that calculating quality, that predator's instinct which Fassbinder so vividly brought out in her; but in Godard's *Passion* she has nothing to sink her teeth into, nor is there anyone strong enough to sink his teeth into her. The minimal plot would have us believe that something is going on between Hanna and Jerzy, but one's own eyes and ears give that the lie. If this indeed is "passion," it is a singularly empty "passion," all in Godard's head.

There is also supposedly something going on between Isabelle and Jerzy. The film doesn't exactly establish this as a grand "passion," either, but at least there seems to be some substance to it. What that substance might be, however, is perplexing. After Isabelle and Jerzy have made love from a frontal position, he proposes to take her "from behind." She assents, saying that she has always dreamed of "an egalitarian sexual relationship . . . one that doesn't leave any traces." The irony is that the act of anal intercourse effectively eliminates from the sexual relationship any trace of sexual *difference* where the woman is concerned. In anal intercourse, she "might as well be a man." Equality, for Isabelle, seems to involve precisely the denial of her femaleness (whence also, it would seem, her tomboy haircut).

Godard cryptically undercuts this notion of

Isabelle's, however, by having Jerzy's voice-over speak the line, "It cannot pass that way because it is not the right passage"—a line which calls into question not only Isabelle's notion of what might constitute an egalitarian sexual relationship but also whether that particular sexual act was consummated. And, at the level of the filmic discourse, Jerzy's line, which extends beyond the scene with Isabelle to overlap the beginning of the next scene, calls attention to the cinematic passage —always arbitrary, always in some sense the "wrong passage"—from one scene to another.

"There are no rules in the cinema," a voice-over insistently repeats near the beginning of *Passion*. And Jerzy keeps saying, "I'm discovering that you have to live stories before inventing them." Moreover, a voice-over tells us that the film we are watching is "not a lie, but something imagined, separated from the real world by profoundly calculated approximations of verisimilitude." All of this is fine, if a bit wordy, especially from a film whose point of departure is supposed to be images rather than words.

Suddenly, however, we are thrown into the composition of Rembrandt's "Nightwatch." Large areas of the composition are in darkness, obscuring the visages of the members of a military company ostensibly keeping watch by night. Here and there, however, unseen sources of light illuminate, as if by spotlight, individual members of the company. At Godard's direction, Raoul Coutard varies the lighting set-up on this *tableau vivant* of actors and actresses representing the "Nightwatch." Different areas of the composition, different individual members of the company, are spotlighted in turn. A voice-over enjoins us, "Don't scrutinize the structure of the shots, do like Rembrandt, look closely at the human beings for a long time, at the lips and into the eyes."

It is a strange enjoinder, coming from Godard. Concentrating on the actors and actresses, allowing ourselves to be caught up in the discursive narrative logic of their gaze, of their facial expressions, ignoring the way the shots are constructed—what is all this but allowing ourselves to fall under the sway of the *representation* at the expense of the *presentation?* Isn't this precisely what Godard has always inveighed against? Perhaps, then, this enjoinder is meant ironically. Another voice-over, ostensibly that of Raoul Coutard, offers the suggestion that "this film might be thought of as a 'Daywatch,' with the sun low on the horizon." In other words, *Passion,* unlike Rembrandt's "Nightwatch," will offer a precise source of illumination.

Visually, this might be true. Metaphorically —and Godard says that *Passion* could have as subtitle: "The World and Its Metaphor" or "The Social Element and Its Metaphor")—it is questionable how much "illumination" the film offers, and about what? In *Passion,* Godard pays lip service to his old concern with class struggle; but here it is rendered in more of a comic-book caricature than ever. Isabelle and the factory owner perform a crazy chase scene, comically pursuing each other around the machinery of the shop floor. And later the owner uses his car as a threatening but carefully controlled battering ram to break the picket line of four or five women protesting the firing of Isabelle. But what the issues are isn't clear. So much for the vivid confrontation of opposing classes.

In any case, where metaphorical illumination is concerned, let us look to the paintings Godard has chosen to reconstruct: perhaps we shall find it in them, or, at least, find an understanding of how they functioned, in Godard's mind, as a source of inspiration. After Rembrandt's "Nightwatch," the next classic painting to figure importantly is Goya's famous "The Third of May," depicting the execution by firing squad of a Spanish peasant by Napoleon's troops. It is, perhaps even more than Picasso's "Guernica," the ultimate "political" painting. It is also, ironically, the ultimate *anecdotal* painting. Death, after all, is quite literally the ultimate anecdote. And the violent taking of a life is the most melodramatic of anecdotal subjects.

Earlier, in *Passion,* Godard has repeatedly reiterated his by now familiar resistance to the tyranny of "stories" in the cinema. (In one brief scene, he has even likened that tyranny of "stories" to the tyranny of a man forcing a woman to submit to anal intercourse, while he shouts, "We need stories.") Yet, here, ironically, in this most "political" work of art that is Goya's "The Third of May," Godard turns the tables on us, the audience. And Godard turns the tables on us, signifi-

Rembrandt's "Night Watch" as recreated in Godard's PASSION

cantly, by turning the angle of vision 90° to the left, so that, instead of looking from a side-view at the men of the firing squad, we view them face-on. This puts *us* in the place of the victim. And Godard has Coutard's camera track, in close-up range, along the phalanx of executioners, their rifle-muzzles (with bayonets attached) filling up the movie screen, almost seeming to jut out menacingly at us, beyond the screen. Meanwhile, a voice-over states emphatically, accusingly, "You do nothing to change yourselves!"

This accusation, like the rifles in the tracking shot, seems aimed directly at us. Perhaps it is Godard's way of saying that even when we look to art for a political stand, even for a "progressive" political stand, we seem to want that same old power relationship in which we submit to the tyranny of the "story," or to the tyranny of the anecdote in painting.

Indeed, the other classic paintings which figure in *Passion* are also strongly anecdotal in subject. There is Delacroix's "The Entry of the Crusaders into Constantinople," an anecdotal subject if ever there was one—and one which Godard explores by animating the *tableau vivant,* exploring it in time as well as in space. Amidst a studio maquette of Constantinople Godard sets four crusaders on horseback in motion. Sporting chain mail and breast armor, they ride through the scale model streets of Constantinople—the horses' hooves resounding on the wooden planking of the studio set. It is a highly charged moment, one of the most highly charged moments in *Passion;* and it culminates with a nude woman being snatched up and carried off by one of the crusaders on horseback. "To the victors go the spoils," might be the caption to Godard's reading of Delacroix's composition.

Here is European Romanticism at its most violent, most paroxysmal delusion of grandeur, with all its fascination for the lure of the exotic, with its "Orientalism," in which the fabled Near East functions as the exotic, erotic "Other," which Europe takes by force, by force of imperialism, although rationalizing it as in the service of that great spiritual idea known as Christianity (which Europe also took from the Near East and brought back there with a vengeance). There is indeed a certain "passion" being acted out here, being visualized here: it is the "passion" of western civilization's "ways of seeing," of European capitalism's political economy of "the look" as an instrument of appropriation.

In patriarchal society, the basic appropriation is that of women by men. By the nineteenth century, after several centuries of colonialism and imperialism, patriarchal western European society found a hypocritical (or highly sublimated) way of holding the nude

Delacroix's "Entry of the Crusaders into Constantinople," as recreated in Godard's PASSION

female body as the object of the masculine gaze, and, at the same time, of effectively masking its own implication in this power structure by *displacement* of the scene, which was "projected" onto another culture, that of the Near East, where an even more flagrant manifestation of patriarchy allegedly held sway. This Orientalism, which has been examined in literature, in the history of ideas, and in politics by Edward Said (see his book *Orientalism,* Vintage, 1979), is here examined, briefly, but with "passion," as it figures in painting—and, by extension, in the cinema—by Godard.

Moreover, Godard, at the same time as he looks at this phenomenon, clearly implicates himself in the act of looking. Of course, Orientalism, *per se,* has not really been an issue in Godard's films; but the appropriation of the nude female body by the masculine gaze certainly has. Woman, in a very real sense, has been Godard's "Orient," his ever mysterious, ever exotic, erotic "Other." Even when he has presented an implicit critique of the ways conventional ("bourgeois") movies exploit the nude female body, Godard has consistently signaled his own implication in the fascination with the very exploitation he is "uncovering." In fact, there is even a superior order of power inherent in a critical enterprise such as Godard's, since his critical stance makes it possible for him (and us, too, if we like) to have our cake and eat it too, to expose the shabby ploys of others while we too enjoy the exposed body of the female, who, even as an object-lesson in demystification, remains an object.

This same conundrum haunts Godard's *Passion.* While he seeks to locate—and examine—its source in nineteenth-century European paintings (not only in Delacroix but also in Ingres, whose "Turkish Bath" we shall get into in a moment), he also liberally sprinkles nude women throughout the fictional "story" sequences in *Passion.* Although women often appear nude in these scenes, men never do. (Even in the scene referred to earlier where a man and woman—not Jerzy with Isabelle, but an anonymous man and an anonymous woman, ostensibly members of the production team of Jerzy's film—engage in anal intercourse, the woman is nude while the man remains fully clothed.) Further, in some cases, the *tableaux vivants* from the paintings become, themselves, the site of fictional scenes where Jerzy and other fully clothed men interact (always in a power position) with the nude women who have been hired as "extras." (An eminently hierarchical and sexist domain, the cinema.)

Of course, the figuration of this interplay (which is always, inevitably, a power play) between clothed men and nude women recalls, above all, a particular painting, which, although not one of the *tableaux vivants* of

Hanna Schygulla and Jerzy Radziwilowicz: PASSION

Godard's *Passion,* nonetheless remains the paradigm case—Edouard Manet's "Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe." In this painting, Manet did not even resort to Orientalism, to the projection of the scene into another culture. On the contrary, the force of this particular painting lies in the fact that Manet brought the subject home, so to speak, to the easily recognizable Parisian milieu of Sunday outings in the fashionable Bois de Boulogne. Godard, too, brings the subject home, that is, to *his* home, the cinema—to the studio set where a film is being made.

In this respect, Godard makes a connection between the Orientalism of certain paintings (such as the Delacroix, and, particularly, the Ingres) and the cinema's own fascination with the exotic. This comes out most strongly in Godard's treatment of the *tableau vivant* of Ingres's "Turkish Bath." It is, of course, a typical harem scene. Nude women of different races (prizes of the sultan's military conquests in distant lands) languish by a tiled pool, at the disposition of their lord and master. This is the world of the painting; but Godard animates it and explores it in terms of the cinema.

In the equally patriarchal world of the cinema, the role of the sultan, the man who controls these women, who gives them orders, who "lays down the law"—and who controls the access of others to these women (at least in terms of "the look")—is taken by the director of the film. He, in turn, may delegate to a trusted confidant (such as his director of production, here played by Laszlo Szabo) some of his authority. These men, thus, exercise their power over these women in several ways. One way, well known in the cinema, is to keep these women waiting . . . to keep them nude and waiting . . . to keep them waiting in the nude . . . until the lord and master (the director) is good and ready for them. Another way, while waiting for the "real" event (the actual shooting), is for the men to circulate among them from time to time, fully clothed, scrutinizing them, scrutinizing their nudity, ordering them to change position slightly, to hold their body differently, putting them through their paces.

Jerzy, as director of the film-within-the-film, brusquely orders one nude young woman to get into the pool and "make an angel." The woman does not respond, and shows no sign of even having heard the order. Another woman intervenes, explaining that the young woman is deaf and dumb, that she indeed did not hear the order. The second woman then acts out for the deaf-mute what she is supposed to do. The young woman then slips into the pool, and, with her head toward the camera, floats on the surface of the water and "makes an angel," opening wide her legs. Jerzy, crouching at water's edge on the other side of the pool, stares somberly. "At what?" asks the director of production. "At the universal wound," replies Jerzy.

The camera, however, does not show us what he looks at: we look only at him looking. What the nude female presents openly cannot be represented openly, for what the female nude represents, in patriarchal society's political economy of "the look," is always the image of the male's obsession with looking at her, with his obsession with what is "there" and what is "not there," between her legs, with his uneasiness confronted with sexual difference.

Finally, in keeping with this obsessional schema, the climactic tableau of Godard's *Passion,* El Greco's "Assumption of the Virgin" (to specify, since he painted several, the one in the Museum of San Vicente in Toledo), is intercut by Godard with the conversational scene leading up to Jerzy's aforementioned defloration of the "perhaps" virgin Isabelle, whom he takes both "fore" and "aft." Here, the film's two distinct blocks of material, the "story" and the images from classic paintings, have their greatest overlap. Indeed, to the strains of the "Agnus Dei" from Mozart's Requiem, they seem to come together, meta-

phorically. Moreover, the movie camera's ability to penetrate the space of the painted picture here becomes a metaphor for the male's penetration of the virgin woman's body. The camera thus becomes the sexual instrument which makes possible the entry into and movement through the impossible/imaginary space, "the fantastic voyage" through the body of a woman.

In short, if *Passion* as a whole represents Godard filming the inside of his own head, this segment of *Passion,* the climactic one, represents Godard filming the inside of the body of a woman, indeed, the inside of the body of the Virgin Mother. It is, then, a return to the source, a complete circle—like the circle one woman makes with her body, in yoga-fashion, when she comes to take Jerzy's order for room service at the motel. After such a climax, there remains only the tying up of loose ends of the "story," which is also circular, since, as we are told in voice-over, "it was already over when it began."

Jerzy, too, must return to the source—in his case, to Poland. In his last act as director of *Passion,* Jerzy exasperatedly walks off the set of the *tableau* of "The Assumption of the Virgin," encountering various costumed extras who want to speak to him about one or another detail of their role or of their conditions of employment. As he agitatedly brushes them off, one by one, Jerzy is last seen—appropriately enough, for this Godard-surrogate—wrestling with his angel, the huge-winged "bird-man" angel from El Greco's "Assumption," who momentarily blocks Jerzy-Godard's exit from film-making, from the studio set that is the site of production . . . of cinema.

NOTES

1. Jean-Luc Godard, (interview) *Cahiers du Cinéma,* No. 194, October 1967, pp. 13-26, 66-70; also translated into English (by D. C. D.) and published in *Film Quarterly,* Vol. XXI, No. 2, Winter 1968-69, pp. 20-35.
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4. Ibid.
5. Quoted by Calvin Ahlgren, in "Godard's Sumptuous Work of Love," San Francisco Chronicle, Datebook, February 26, 1984, pp. 28-29.
6. Op. cit.

Reviews

VARIETY

Producer: Renee Shafransky. Director: Bette Gordon. Script: Kathy Acker from an original story by Bette Gordon. Directors of Photography: Tom DiCillo and John Foster. Editing: Ila Von Hasperg. Music: John Lurie. A co-production of ZDF, West German Television, Channel Four Television, England, Arnold Abelson and New York State Council on the Arts.

An opening montage: a fine-boned woman's face in profile, a longer shot of the woman poised, then diving into a blue bottomed pool, a fragmenting close-up of water-wet thighs and the bright red and white stripes of a bathing suit covering slim hips. Even before *Variety*'s credits roll, Bette Gordon maps out the course of her film—descent and immersion into the realm of eroticism and desire. Slipping into the elusive, difficult-to-define territories of fantasy, sexuality and power, *Variety* embraces deviation as a path to self-knowledge, the forbidden as an antidote to impotence. But Gordon is quick to recognize complexity and to question the price of such guilty pleasures. While exploring the consequences of surrender through the persona of her alter ego, *Variety*'s heroine Christine, she also acknowledges the precariousness of her own position. As director of *Variety,* Gordon takes the tremendous risk not only of exposing her own sexual fantasies to countless viewers, but also of expressing uncertainty over a furiously debated, extraordinarily divisive issue—that of women and pornography.

Variety is Bette Gordon's second feature. *Empty Suitcases,* her first (1980), was a fashionably oblique, angry narrative about women, terrorism and storytelling set predominantly in New York City. Clearly departing from the stripped-down formalism of that earlier film, *Variety* shines with the polished production values of its $80,000 budget, raised from ZDF West German Television, Great Britain's Channel 4, and New York State Council on the Arts. Yet for all its gloss, it is a film ruled by darkness, both in its *film noir* stylistics and preponderance of nighttime scenes, and in its script, based on a story by Gordon and written by Kathy Acker, an author whose fiction is distinguished by a darkly perverse sexual vision.

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Gordon calls *Variety* a film about looking. Its narrative observes the experiences of Christine, an attractive, hip young woman who, desperate for a job, takes one selling tickets at Variety, a 42nd Street porn house. Working there, she gradually becomes obsessed with the sounds and images that surround her. At the same time, she develops a fascination with one of the customers, an almost-distinguished looking businessman named Louie, who gallantly buys Christine a Coke, invites her out for a drink, and finally corners her into joining him for a Saturday night Yankees game. Christine's interest in Louie is piqued by her tenuously founded suspicion that he might be entangled in a Seafood Workers' Union shakedown operation being investigated by her journalist lover, Mark. When, after a chauffeur-driven trip to the ball park, Louie is called away on business, her curiosity gives way to passionate pursuit. In a classically *film noir* sequence, Christine shadows him as he meets an unidentified associate under a bridge, enters a lit doorway that might be a nightclub, then disappears at the terminal of the Staten Island Ferry. Over the succeeding days and months she follows him into sleazy sex arcades and stalks him on the water front. She boards a train he takes to a bleak seaside resort, checks into the room next to his at a cheap motel, eavesdrops on a business deal, and rifles his bag, coming away only with a magazine fetchingly titled *Tiny Tits and Cute Asses.* Always unseen, she holds him under her gaze. At the film's close, she phones him, reveals her knowledge of his movements, and demands that he meet her at a desolate intersection in lower Manhattan. "Money isn't an issue," she insists, "just be there." Existing outside any temporal context, *Variety*'s final shot of a dark, deserted intersection gives no indication of whether Christine or Louie materialized for their rendezvous or the repercussions of their encounter—it's an utter enigma.

Christine's act of spying on Louie is an inversion of the usual male-originating voyeuristic gaze, a usurping of male power and prerogative that runs straight through *Variety* from its locker-room opening. Christine lifts weights, beats the boys at pool, and has her Sam Spade moves down to a T. She trespasses into the all-male world of massage parlors, quarter movies and dirty bookstores, and the

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equally forbidden domain of male work symbolized by the Fulton Fish Market, a rather tongue-in-cheek metaphor for pimping, recognizable to anyone who's heard a woman called a "tuna." But Christine's greatest transgression lies in her growing fixation and identification with pornography. Through pornography she finds a voice and a power that hitherto eluded her.

That voice is literalized when, three times during the course of the film, Christine falls into spontaneous pornographic recitations. These are privileged moments of erotic completion in a film that otherwise teases with fragments of photos and films, and their special status is well deserved. For it is in Christine's erotic (or pornographic) reveries that Gordon measures the evolution of her self-possession, and the parallel dissolution of Mark's, as evidenced in the silencing of his voice.

During the first sequence, set in a luncheonette, Christine begins to speak only after Mark has talked at length about his work. Claiming equal time, she tells him about her new job at Variety, sketching in the details of her day.

Then, as if suddenly distracted, she stares into the distance and begins to recount what she's seen on the screen. Embarrassed and mortified, Mark abruptly announces that he's got to go, leaving her alone at the counter.

In the second sequence, Mark and Christine are seated in a parked car eating take-out in Chinatown. Again, Mark is holding forth on the drama and danger of his work when Christine cuts him off, echoing his words and transforming them into the launching point of an erotic fantasy. She speaks haltingly, yet with the clarity of a visionary, describing the action as if it's unreeling before her eyes: a woman in red snakeskin heels and a black satin slip parades in front of a man, exciting him but resisting his advances until she herself is ready. On her knees, she opens herself to him, she waits for him. Dumbfounded, Mark asks, "Are you all right? Why are you telling me this?" Christine replies, "I'm telling you about my life."

In the last sequence only Christine speaks. Eyes heavily made-up, a leopard-printed scarf around her neck, she has an air of composure and authority as she looks directly into the camera and narrates this story: a hitchhiker, given shelter by a woman who picks him up, watches unseen on two successive night as his hostess, naked, is caressed by a gigantic snake and entered by a tiger. On the third night she undulates against his body, growls in his ear, and seduces him. At Christine's side, Mark endeavors to absorb himself in a game of pinball. Like a great phallic projection, its glittering, flashing lights substitute for the orgasmic frenzy of Christine's tale, protecting him from its disturbing allure. But the image of the Sphinx decorating the face of the machine reasserts the bestial nature of woman and the threatening enigma she represents.

Lovely Christine, with her cool blond beauty and her good mind—she likes working at Variety. Bette Gordon has given us a heroine who is neither a dupe nor a toy, but who finds something compelling in pornography. What that something is remains very intentionally imprecise. If Gordon understands her own fascination with pornography (though I suspect she doesn't), she isn't telling. She isn't interested in filling in the details herself, but in invoking a condition of analysis and self-analysis in the viewer. Bereft of explanations for Christine's behavior, we must supply our own.

Why does Christine follow Louie? Not simply because she suspects him, but because she needs to know about him. Here knowledge should be read biblically, for Christine's interest seems overbrimming with erotic compulsion. And what is it she finds in the darkened Variety theater, in the magazines and sex shows? Perhaps it is the power of women to occupy male sexual fantasy. Women with "tiny tits" (like hers), women in fake lesbian liaisons, women degraded, but always women commanding men to orgasm and thus diminishing them. Christine has awakened to the sheer power of erotic fantasy. An obscene caller leaves a message on her answering machine and she listens not once, but twice to his supplications and promises, repelled but transfixed. Her sexual reveries have an impact upon Mark far more profound than all her solicitous attention to his work.

Variety's *mise-en-scène* is dense with mirrors, shiny surfaces and illusory reflections, all obliquely drawing attention to the act of looking itself. In a shot of the rank sprawl of Times Square, Gordon lingers specifically on a placard for a movie called *I Like To Watch,* isolating a position all film viewers share. We watch Christine and, in this film directed by a woman who identifies herself as a feminist, she is *still* the object of our gaze. Louie watches Christine and she in turn watches him. Christine watches men watching women on the screen and watching her in Variety's glassed-in kiosk and on the crowded street. And in her own mirror, Christine watches herself as she dons the fetishized black lace, garters, satin and stays of Frederick's of Hollywood femininity. So circular is this exchange of looks, this exchange of power, that it's difficult to situate the director's own vision, or perhaps to liberate it from ambiguity.

Variety seems to be a work supremely formulated in response to the observations of feminist film theorists, a film that addresses what has become the critical litany: women exist only to be the objects of the male gaze. The dominant male look at the woman leaves no power for the woman's own pleasure in seeing. When the woman does look, she is punished by narrative processes that transform curiosity and desire into masochistic

fantasy or actual terror. Women viewers find on the screen only models of their own powerlessness.

How strange it is that, having created a film that is so true to these points of rhetoric, that seeks to right these sexist abuses, Gordon should absolve herself of the grand dictum: that only a film-making process that questions and refuses dominant cinematic conventions can begin to speak for women. In certain intellectual circles, Gordon's embrace of conventional, manipulative narrativity may be as heretical as her flirtation with smut is for anti-porn feminists. True, the director's use of extended takes sans dialogue and distancing long shots is a violation of Hollywood norms. Yet the basic mechanisms of narrativity—the transformation of character, the process of identification, the development of suspense and the wish for its resolution are all very much in evidence. The cynical among us may claim that the until-now determinedly avant-garde Gordon has sacrificed her artistic integrity and bowed to the unspoken demands of her European television co-producers, but I think there's something very different at work. For, if the subject of Gordon's film is desire, what better way to explore it than through a form that thrives upon and breeds desire? Narrativity, in its building of tension and its demand for conclusion, parallels the mechanism of sexual desire itself. *Variety*'s narrative, sparked by a play between danger and desire, mounts in paranoid tension to an end which delivers absolutely nothing. Its climax is a sort of cinematic coitus interruptus, denying the viewer the quasi-sexual satisfaction of resolution and narrative closure.

In pornography, narrativity exists primarily to propel the reader or viewer from one sexual stimulus to the next; it establishes a reality from which fantasy can depart. For *Variety*'s heroine, the fantasy of pornography serves as a liberating means to self-hood and power. But as much as Gordon may bless Christine's forays into deviance, she also seems to register hesitation over the repercussions of such a solitary quest. Her concern focuses upon Christine's deteriorating emotional relationships and the erosion of her ability to distinguish fantasy from functional reality. Two mirroring sequences measure the degree to which Christine's self-involvement colors her response to others. Early in the film, Christine responds immediately to answering machine messages left by her mother (offering her the familiar excuses and white lies of a dutiful daughter), her best friend, and her lover. Later, the scene is replayed with Christine luridly lit, dolled up in blue satin, and posing before her mirror as the machine plays back a string of worried and irritated communications from those same callers. And of course where Mark's concerned, pornography changes everything.

To muddy the waters, one could suggest a different reading—that Christine is better off without her self-centered, chauvinistic boyfriend and her bourgeois mother. And what of the notion that Christine is possessed of a delusion of invulnerability as she haunts peep shows, shadows a supposed criminal and covers the water front? It can be countered by the argument that hers is a healthy reaction to women's sexual repression and societal confinement—a psychic and literal "taking back the night." Whichever interpretation strikes one's fancy, these choices wreak havoc with ideology. The feminist argument leads to an endorsement of pornography as a freeing force, quite the inverse of the actual feminist position, while the alternate interpretation paves the road to psychological breakdown with nudie shots and stroke books, contradicting the opposition's claim that porn is at worst harmless diversion, at best a beneficial sexual safety valve.

I spoke earlier about attempting to liberate Gordon's views from ambiguity as a response to just this sort of set-up. As critics and viewers, we are accustomed to seeing ambiguity as a condition that cries out for redemption, contradiction as the mark of a faulty artistic vision. In Gordon's case, however, her conflict-riddled stance on pornography is both honest and provocative; the position of confusion becomes one of courage and even power. Gordon speaks from what she calls the "gap between my sexual identity and my sexual fantasy—who I am and who I am in my head." As Gordon's alter ego, Christine acts out, in the extreme, not only the director's sexual fears and fantasies, but those of an entire generation of contemporary women coming to terms with sexual and aggressive behavior. Watching Christine, we recognize the aftershock of

guilt-inducing taboos ("Nice girls don't"), the terror of secret desire unleashed, the suspicion that men don't really want sexually active (i.e., demanding) women, as well as the dream of extraordinary power mined from sexual energy. The intensity of female sexual expression presented by Gordon is a far cry from the gentle, nurturing, sensitive brand endorsed by many feminists. She delineates a variety of female lust that equals the male's in its capacity for consuming and objectifying the Other; and she proposes that, like men, women project erotic fantasies upon those they desire.

Variety was accepted for screening at the Directors' Fortnight at Cannes, but the film hasn't yet had a commercial New York opening, exhibitors and distributors there being quite unreceptive. Writing in the *Village Voice,* Amy Taubin observed that the film is being received with consternation and Gordon accused of "embracing images that are degrading to women." With the "If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem" mentality dichotomizing the women's movement over these issues, that's not surprising. Joining the company of Ruby Rich, Ellen Willis and others who have criticized the feminist antipornography campaign, Gordon adds a strong questioning voice. Courageously inconclusive, she urges us to look deeper, to savor complexity, and to consider sexuality in all its profound variety. —LINDA DUBLER

ZELIG

Written and directed by Woody Allen. Producer: Robert Greenhut. Photography: Gordon Willis. Music: Dick Hyman. Orion/Warners.

Zelig, Woody Allen's fictional compilation documentary about a chameleon-like man who changes shape and color so that he can blend into his social surroundings, looks at first like a clever stunt. But it is also something of a departure for Allen and, on reflection, may be his richest and most original work so far.

The film's most readily noticeable virtues have to do with the ways in which Allen and cinematographer Gordon Willis have blended their own footage in with archival material—sometimes finding ways to insert Allen's image into vintage photographs and newsreels. In some respects, it's simply a visual *tour de force* in which an Allen film persona becomes a part of the fads and scandals of the twenties via lovingly recreated amateur and newsreel images done in the manner of their period. But *Zelig,* in its roundabout and quasi-parodistic way, is also a love story, a fable on confirmity, and a surprisingly complex meditation on media images. Allen's preoccupations with psychiatry, sexual relations, intellectuality, and Jewishness all get further play here, but the unexpected consequences of *Zelig*'s form put such matters in a more complex and rewarding light than has been the case with previous Allen films. Along the way, *Zelig* stretches the boundaries of Allen's comedy and marks the most sophisticated development in his career as an increasingly self-reflexive film-maker.

It is tempting to view the film as merely a set of variations, however erudite, on Allen's established comic persona and on his terrain as film *auteur.* But while the title character takes his place among the neurotically self-deprecating comic-romantic protagonists of Allen's films, Zelig is perhaps the most distanced figure in that group. The "typical" Woody Allen bits are divided among several characters, and neither Allen's role nor any other is permitted to dominate the foreground. Whereas even the "darker" Allen films like *Manhattan* and *Stardust Memories* put some variation of "Woody Allen" in the foreground, *Zelig* centers on something more conceptual. At first, that concept and its reverberations seem primarily comic and satiric, but as the film's preoccupation with images and social psychology grows increasingly complex, it also becomes clearer that *Zelig* has some special dimensions. The title character is less a "star" than a figure in a meditation with the meditation itself taking the foreground.

The film's concerns with conformism and with love are obvious enough, and the casual air of the comic elements may at first limit our responses to those concerns. But the film has a kind of delayed-reaction effect. The title character's chameleon syndrome is clearly grounded in an overwhelming need to conform, to blend in, to be like others and to be

guilt-inducing taboos ("Nice girls don't"), the terror of secret desire unleashed, the suspicion that men don't really want sexually active (i.e., demanding) women, as well as the dream of extraordinary power mined from sexual energy. The intensity of female sexual expression presented by Gordon is a far cry from the gentle, nurturing, sensitive brand endorsed by many feminists. She delineates a variety of female lust that equals the male's in its capacity for consuming and objectifying the Other; and she proposes that, like men, women project erotic fantasies upon those they desire.

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liked by them. But what at first seems an almost cursory satire on the conformist impulse becomes increasingly perceptive as it becomes increasingly complex. For Zelig's extravagant desire to appear "normal" is itself "normal": his chameleon transformations are aberrant, and yet they are also simply dramatic extensions of typical behavior in a mass society. In one of the film's modest but stunning twists, the conformist impulse leads Zelig to become a Nazi in Hitler's Germany: as such he is not only "the ultimate conformist" but also a bitterly ironic comment on the Jew who, in the words of one of the film's *Reds*-like "witnesses," "wanted to assimilate like crazy." Zelig emerges from all that as a hero when he and Eudora Fletcher (his lover-psychiatrist played by Mia Farrow) flee the Nazis by flying across the Atlantic upside down. Zelig blithely tells the newsreel cameras that his exploits show "what you can do if you're a total psychotic"; the character seems to intend no irony, but his words reverberate with surprising force in the film's gradually developing sense of a situation in which heroes, conformists, and the public with its "crazes" and whims are both "mad" and "normal."

A certain rich ambivalence also prevails in the film's reflections on the decade or so of mostly American history which is an essential part of Zelig's story. A substantial piece of *Zelig* is a kind of love letter to the sensationalism, fads, and scandals of the "Roaring Twenties," with part of the affection being expressed through those loving recreations of newsreels and "amateur" films from the days before people in general had adapted to the camera's gaze in the way that they have now. And the love story is in part from the movies' age of innocence, with the fictional documentary form serving as a modernist means of reviving such feelings. But Zelig is also the bewildered and dehumanized victim of a society in which he is alternately glamorized and vilified, glorified and institutionalized, celebrated and commercialized, liberated and "fine-tuned," commemorated and forgotten. And the Nazi episode and the sense of psychosis beneath the crazes of the period's popular culture ultimately cast the historical setting in a light that mixes much bitterness amid the fondness. After Zelig's brief alliance

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with Hitler, it is difficult not to see the Roaring Twenties of the film as an oblique, deluded prelude to the era of genocidal dictatorships: glimpses of the conformism, the fickleness, and the hypocrisy in pop culture become more ominous in this light, and various passing remarks by the film's witnesses leave us with the disturbing perception that "things haven't changed all that much."

The importance of love is evident enough in what develops between Zelig and his psychiatrist. But, here too, enriching complications overtake what at first seems to be merely an oddly comical romance. Love is a "cure" not only for Zelig, but also for his doctor: she "treats" him not just with psychiatric acumen but with "unconditional positive regard" as well, and this decidedly personal approach also serves as an antidote to her dissatisfaction with a life that has been almost exclusively focused on professional success. In one of the film's newsreels, the couple is paid tribute as "an inspiration to the young of this nation who will one day grow up and be great doctors and great patients." Whatever the speaker's intentions, his words serve the film's view of love in a metaphorical (and deceptively slippery) way. For with this cou-

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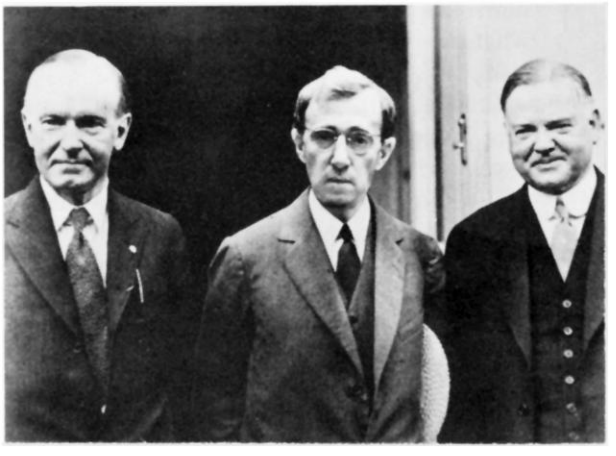

ple, love transcends neurosis only when the partners are able to perform as both doctor and patient on each other's behalf: in a psychiatrically self-conscious relationship, psychiatric self-consciousness is itself one of the things that the partners have to find a "cure" for. But the "cure" remains in (somewhat comical) doubt: the doctor-patient arrangement makes sense more as metaphor than as method; and a key aspect of Zelig's psychological condition, the frustrated desire to read *Moby-Dick,* is still haunting him at the end of his life. Moreover, the film's sunlit "happy ending" leaves us to conclude for ourselves as to whether or not the contented doctor-patient couple is an emblem of a conformism which aligns itself with the myths of romantic love.

But even these major subcurrents are altered, or convoluted, by Allen's knowing play with the film's images and its form. Visually, the film might have been inspired by the newsreel segment of *Citizen Kane,* and the film's piecing together of a man's life has intriguing parallels with the Welles film. *Zelig*'s title character is not as emphatically "mysterious" as Charles Foster Kane is, but both men's stories are subject to similar ambiguities and uncertainties. Both exist for us only through the accounts of others, and both portraits are cast in forms which set traps for the oversimplified response. Rosebud notwithstanding, Kane's personality is something of an unfinished jigsaw puzzle which defies summation; true love notwithstanding, Zelig is a creature of media images in a "document" which is seemingly exhaustive at the same time that it is vaguely but persistently unreliable. The view we have of Zelig is limited in most respects to what can be retrieved from photographs and movie footage. The part of his life that took place after he stopped appearing in newsreels is touched on only in passing. Thus, what the images convey also provokes skepticism.

In one of the more dramatic examples of this, a newsreel celebrating Eudora Fletcher's psychiatric success with Zelig's case concludes with a shot of her doing some sewing while the voice-over commentator observes that she has proven that women can do something besides sew. This bit of concocted newsreel, of course, slyly evokes the limited perspectives and casual contradictions in an era's assumptions. The remark is a bit of self-cancelling lipservice paid by the newsreel to the feminism of the twenties, but the benighted quaintness of the remark is only part of the effect that Allen gets here. There is also a certain disparity between the image and the remark—first in that the image seems to regress from the point that the voice-over commentator is trying to make and second in that the image is being used on behalf of a logic which is almost certainly separate from the logic behind the original shot (one can imagine Fletcher agreeing to demonstrate "another" of her talents for the camera, but it seems unlikely that she would have posed for the purpose which is imposed by the voice-over). Such moments reflect the extraordinary ingenuity that has gone into this "false documentary" and into images like these which are at once so innocent and so complex. But they also remind us of the manipulability and unreliability of photographic images, thereby provoking a critical awareness which must pervade our ultimate responses to the film.

Allen's satirical intentions are more plainly in the foreground in a newsreel interview with Fletcher's mother, but the satire also offers one of the clearest examples of constricting media codes in *Zelig*. The interviewer plunges blindly ahead on a line of questioning that presumes the standard set of sentiments (determination and pride, etc.) in the parents of someone successful. But Fletcher's mother, a sort of thoughtful sourpuss, answers forthrightly enough to evoke a trail of doubts, misgivings, and sadnesses that further highlights the anodyne, blandly conventional answers which are implicit (and sometimes explicit) in the questions themselves. The interviewer's smarmy evasions of the realities alluded to by Mrs. Fletcher are yet another element of the newsreels which cast a kind of retroactive doubt on all of the material from which compilation-style film portraits are built. No less ironic is the sense of mutual obliviousness between the interviewer and interviewee. This and the stock questions which seem to "cue" stock answers call further attention to the tendency toward pigeonholing that was also evident in the shot of the psychiatrist at her sewing. In such instances, the film-maker seems to beckon to the audi-

ence with variants of Woody-humor while also making the irony strong enough that we maintain a critical detachment.

But *Zelig* is not quite as detached as this may suggest. If unusually distanced for an Allen comedy, it is also a film which is capable of undercutting its own air of detachment. This is perhaps especially evident in the doubly ironic contrasts that emerge from the inclusion of scenes from a supposed Warner Brothers film biography on Zelig. The documentary witnesses assert that "the movie" falsifies the Zelig story, and indeed the emotionalized "classical" *mise en scène* of this film-within-a-film is a hokey variation on the story that we are getting in the putatively more objective terms of documentary. But the documentary version of Zelig's life also has much in common with its "Hollywood" counterpart. The recreated Nazi newsreel footage frequently looks as false as the Hollywood version, and the latter's melodramatic emphasis on Eudora's determination to find a *personal* solution to Zelig's emotional problems is closer to the substance of the "factual" version than may at first be evident. And given Hollywood's penchant for playing up personal solutions rather than those which call for larger perspectives, it is intriguing to contemplate the possibility of a double-edged irony here, with the documentary version being every bit as complicit in stock answers as the patently "fake" one is.

Like its view of the twenties, this movie is both bitter and fond. For all its critical distancing, it is also a film which frequently dwells on and takes pleasure in the surface of things. Its loving pastiches (by Dick Hyman) of the period's music are one major sign of that lyrical impulse, but so is its attention to visual detail in the fabricated newsreels. A shot of Zelig with a group of bathing beauties, for example, might be viewed as a little meditation on the quirks of silent-era newsreel photography: it's a still camera pose for a moving picture camera, a "durational" tableau with Zelig acting "hot" serially via an "aroused" shiver repeated several times; it is the non-actor acting "arousal" repeatedly, with the result that its cliché is exposed (it's mechanical) and transformed (Zelig's self-consciousness makes him change each repetition in a way that freshens it with spontaneity and a movie-made authenticity). The pleasant, lyrical elements of such a shot override the accompanying deconstructive tendencies, and *Zelig* seems in the process to arrive at a kind of sophisticated retreat to lost innocence which nevertheless insists on the irreversibility of the loss.

As such, *Zelig* is both nostalgic and analytical. Like *Citizen Kane* it is a kind of heroic monument to ambiguity but one which makes certain concessions to its audience. *Kane* has Rosebud and images of smoke at the end to provide a kind of climax within the codes of Hollywood melodrama. *Zelig*'s love story performs a similar function, but its final images (an "amateur" shot of the two lovers strolling in the afternoon sunshine) is in part a commentary on the film's romantic nostalgia: the lovers are seen from a distance and eventually they move beyond the camera's range. They and what they represent recede in the distance and disappear from view, making them at once figures of archival footage and images of living beings whose lives move beyond the camera's ability to follow and visualize. *Zelig*'s "movie-made authenticity" resides in moments like these, which expose image codes while also giving new meaning to the images themselves.

Not the least of the thoughtful pleasures of *Zelig* comes from its wealth of implications at a variety of levels. It can also be taken, for example, as a tribute to Mia Farrow, who here and in Allen's subsequent *Broadway Danny Rose* reveals previously unsuspected sides of her ability as an actress. There is a fine play of forms in its crafty mélange of movie *genres:* newsreel, home movie, Hollywood pastiche, medical document, talking-head interview. And its allusiveness sets up reverberations which enrich structure and—especially via Lindbergh and Chaplin—theme.

—PETER HOGUE AND
MARION BRONSON

SWING SHIFT

Director: Jonathan Demme. Producer: Jerry Bick. Script: Rob Morton. Photography: Tak Fujimoto. Music: Patrick Williams. Warners.

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Director: Jonathan Demme. Producer: Jerry Bick. Script: Rob Morton. Photography: Tak Fujimoto. Music: Patrick Williams. Warners.

There's a terrific movie in the World War II home front comedy drama *Swing Shift,* but

it's not up on the screen. Goldie Hawn plays Kay, a young housewife whose husband Jack (Ed Harris) joins the navy after the attack on Pearl Harbor; feeling listless and useless, she signs up for a job in a war plant. The director, Jonathan Demme, seems at his best when he gives us a scene in which Kay and the other new female employees—the motliest troupe of women since the chorus girls in *The Night They Raided Minsky's*—receive preliminary instruction from an earnest, permanently flushed man with Mr. Spock ears who tells them that they ought to settle easily into their jobs at the plant because women are used to repetitive tasks. A few minutes later Charles Napier (who played the cheerful, bigamous trucker in Demme's *Handle with Care*) shows up, masticating a whole pack of gum in his massive square jaw, as an old factory hand resentful of the women who have invaded his realm, and we anticipate a series of face-offs between him and Kay. The subject matter—how full-time work changes these women, how they meld into a team, how friendship springs up among them and how it resembles and differs from male camaraderie, how they cope with the jibes and jokes of the men who are asked suddenly to see them as coworkers—has extraordinary potential, especially considering the cast (which also includes Kurt Russell and Fred Ward) and Jonathan Demme's record. (As well as *Handle with Care*—a bustling, offbeat farce about CB operators—he directed *Melvin and Howard,* the best American comedy of recent years, and the charming TV short film *Who Am I This Time?,* starring Christopher Walken as a hilariously ill-at-ease community theater actor who turns into every character he plays.) But aside from a few sequences, *Swing Shift* bypasses this wonderful theme and settles for a dumb, unconvincing story about a woman who learns, in her husband's absence, that she can fall in love with someone else (Russell) and that Hazel, the woman across the street (Christine Lahti), whom she always considered sleazy and loose, is really nice after all. It's a movie about how unwise it is to judge someone by her appearance, because she might turn out to be your best friend.

The fairly widespread story about the making of *Swing Shift* indicates that Goldie Hawn ordered Demme to cut some scenes centered on Hazel (Lahti), that she called Robert Towne in to shoot part of it and *his* contributions were thrown out, that Bo Goldman and Nancy Dowd, the original screenwriters, took their names off it, and that the credited screenwriter, Rob Morton, is a pseudonym (for Dowd). Certainly, even if we hadn't heard all of these behind-the-scenes allegations, we'd have no trouble perceiving that *something* had been cut. The opening scenes, until Kay and Hazel get work on the swing shift (four p.m. to midnight) at the plant, zip by so quickly that we seem to be watching a slide show—glowingly lit by Demme's faithful cinematographer, Tak Fujimoto—and Hazel's relationship with Biscuits (Fred Ward), the owner of the club where she sings, makes no sense at all: poor Biscuits shows up once every half hour to beg Hazel's forgiveness for his infidelities or to ask her to marry him, and we never understand how we're supposed to respond to him. (We also never find out what happened to Hazel's singing career.) But the off-camera clash of egos doesn't account for the peculiarly uninteresting focus of the picture, and neither does the participation of too many cooks; in fact, one can only locate Bo Goldman's fine hand (the hand that penned *Melvin and Howard* and *Shoot the Moon*) in two or three scenes—notably one in which a teenage soldier breaks sad news to one of the women in the plant and grows embarrassed when she weeps on his shoulder. The central problem with the movie, as far as I can make out, is Nancy Dowd.

Both of Dowd's major screenplays prior to *Swing Shift,* the 1976 hockey picture *Slap Shot* and the much-praised 1978 *Coming Home,* have taken banal, schematic approaches to promising material, and *Swing Shift* is really just *Coming Home* set in an earlier war. Like Sally, the role Jane Fonda played in *Coming Home,* Kay is a conservative sit-at-home who discovers her strength—and a more exciting sex life—when she joins the work force, and like Sally, too, Kay comes across more as an emblem of the road to liberation than as a flesh-and-blood character. Clearly Dowd fashions herself a feminist, but anyone could have written the scene in which Kay saves another woman (Lisa Pelikan, another talented performer whose part is not developed) from being crushed by a falling object

Christine Lahti, Goldie Hawn, and Kurt Russell in SWING SHIFT

and thus earns a promotion, and the relationship between the two main female characters, aside from the touches Christine Lahti brings to it, is one of those antique Hollywood bicker-and-reconcile numbers that surface every few years—most recently in *The Turning Point* and *Rich and Famous.* (Anyone who believes Dowd's feminist claims should take a look at *Slap Shot,* in which Lindsay Crouse cleans herself up and changes her hairstyle so her man will notice her.)

Dowd's unnuanced writing doesn't set off Demme's gift for layered human comedy. No wonder (as he has indicated in interviews) he hated working on this project; he seems stranded through most of it, trying to create the kind of movie *Swing Shift* should have been out of bits and snatches, like a kid trying to make a giant cookie out of leftover scraps of dough. To his credit, he maintains a warm, friendly mood, and the heavily populated plant scenes, designed by Peter Jamison in subdued reds, whites and khakis, are directed with impressive facility; then there are some truly lyrical moments, like a shot of a bus full of jamming jazz musicians drifting through the nighttime countryside. In brief, Demme prevents *Swing Shift* from being a painful experience, though it won't do much for his reputation, because the virtues he displays here—tact, restraint, the kind of control that doesn't declare itself in ostentation—are practically negative qualities in a movie so obviously wrong-headed and messed-up.

In *Coming Home,* Jane Fonda exposed the stringent limits of her role by struggling to turn Sally into a human being. Goldie Hawn takes a less courageous route: she recycles *Private Benjamin.* Hawn is a delightful comedienne, and she gave superb dramatic performances in a pair of mid-seventies films, *The Sugarland Express* and *Shampoo,* but her acting shows a worrisome cuteness here. Her face tells us how proud Kay is of every step she takes, as if she were a child learning to read; she patronizes the character. In what remains of her role, Christine Lahti gives a much tougher, more emotionally vivid performance—though the costumer, Joe Tompkins, could have treated her more generously. We can sense Lahti reaching for more unusual effects—like the way she smiles in anticipation of a crisis—while Goldie Hawn settles. When Jack returns on leave unexpectedly and finds Kay partying with Hazel and Lucky (Kurt Russell), who has become Kay's lover, we wait for Hawn to register the strangeness of the encounter, but Ed Harris and Russell do all the acting in this scene.

Ironically (and perhaps revealingly), in Dowd's screenplays the men make more of an impression than the women: the showcase performances in *Slap Shot* and *Coming Home* were given by Paul Newman and Jon Voight, and in *Swing Shift* our attention is riveted on Russell and—during his brief tenure in the plot—Harris, who hits much more interesting low notes in the Bruce Dern role than Dern himself

did in *Coming Home*. Based on the work he's done in *Used Cars,* in the TV movie *Elvis,* in *Silkwood* and in *Swing Shift,* Russell never goes over the same ground; he seems slighter and softer here than he did in *Silkwood,* and his broad-shouldered strength in that film (which practically held it together) has given way to a different—more tentative—sort of warmth. Unfortunately, Dowd writes him out of the movie when Jack returns from the war, but that's characteristic of her style: she writes the whole *movie* out of the movie. *Swing Shift* is a mess, but one can forgive Jonathan Demme for his part in it (especially after seeing his Talking Heads concert film, *Stop Making Sense,* which closed this year's San Francisco Film Festival); Nancy Dowd and Goldie Hawn don't squirm off the hook so easily.

—STEVE VINEBERG

LE RETOUR DE MARTIN GUERRE

Director: Daniel Vigne. Script: Vigne and Jean-Claude Carrière. Photography: Andra Neau. Art direction: Alain Negre. Music: Michel Portal. European International Distribution, Ltd.

It has become all but a cliché that we have lost our legends, the store of tales with which to enrich our reading of narrative, and that this loss has flattened and impoverished our experience of mass culture. At the same time, it has led Hollywood film-makers on a determined search for ways to recapture the sense of depth or richness that comes from watching the enactment of a story with which we are already familiar. For a "Golden Age" director like Capra, the search led to a nostalgia for a past we had not even realized we had lost, perhaps because it had never existed. For more recent film-makers like Lucas or Spielberg, it leads in a tight circle back to the films of their youth, with the result that their films often seem hermetic and shallow. The first directing assignment for Daniel Vigne, a French contemporary of theirs, was a television series with the eminent historian Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie (*Les paysans de Languedoc, Montaillou*), so it is not surprising that *Martin Guerre,* Vigne's first theatrical film, looks so obviously historical, nor that a solemn voice-over immediately assures us that the story we are about to see is "true."

Martin Guerre is unusually pretty in a conventional sense, in great part because, according to the publicity packet and published interviews with Vigne, it was designed to recall Brueghel and La Tour. This practice certainly made the film look historical, and so accounts for some of the reverence with which it has been received, but it also reveals a misunderstanding of fine art as well as of film, particularly since Berger's *Ways of Seeing*. Finally, it gives the film a surface sheen that risks masking the desperate, to-the-death character of the struggle between these peasants and, for that matter, between them and their judges. For all these reasons, I shall talk in what follows less about the way the film looks to us than about the ways the characters look at each other, and the way we look at them and their story. In the final analysis, we shall find that the ways they look at each other and we look at them have a direct bearing on the film's claim to historical veracity. Since this claim is so central a part of the film's appeal, though, let us examine it first.

There was in fact a young land-holding peasant named Martin Guerre who left his parents, wife and infant son in the south of France in the middle of the sixteenth century to seek his fortune as a mercenary soldier. Almost ten years later, a stronger and smarter man from a neighboring village named Pansette (Gérard Depardieu), returned to pose as the departed Martin and claim his family and property. Martin's parents had died after his flight, and his wife's mother had married his father's brother Pierre. The first thing Pansette does upon entering the village is proclaim his contentment at this union; we shall see later that the second marriage is crucial to understanding this unusual story.

The whole village welcomes Pansette—even, after a brief hesitation, Martin's wife Bertrande de Rols (Nathalie Baye). His new neighbors warm quickly to Pansette, dazzled by his literacy and beguiled by his story-telling. His life is happy and uneventful for three years, until the eruption of a bitter financial quarrel between him and his uncle Pierre, who then files suit against him for imposture. The film follows the divisions in the village caused by the suit and ends with the execution of the court decision upon Pansette.

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The first thing we notice during the film is the isolation of village life, as we watch Pansette enter the outlying fields from the sur-

rounding forest. The vegetation crowding in on the frame conveys the villagers' sense of being hemmed in by the undisciplined growth of the forest from which they had cleared their lands only a generation before, and which threatened to reclaim their fields if they faltered. Their isolation breeds suspicion in the villagers: their first reaction to the stranger is solely to find out who he is (their response to all his talk is "Mais, qui es-tu?"), while the voluble Pansette tries to talk his way around them.

In view of the villagers' isolation, and their attendant suspicion of outsiders, there is no clearer indication of the bitterness of the struggle between them than the fact that they deliberately went outside the bounds of their society to resolve it. Indeed, it is so hard for us to imagine the intensity of conflicts like the ones between Pansette and Pierre, between Bertrande and her mother (all but lost when the film was recut for distribution in the US), or between Pansette and the other leading young man of the village, named Nicolas, that the real strength of the film is its success at making the bitterness of these conflicts visible.

Struggles like the one for primacy between Pansette and Nicolas were central to early modern village life, but they paled beside the special intensity of the endemic struggles between children and parents over control of and access to real property, the means of production and survival in the countryside. The narrative key to the film is the argument between Pansette and Pierre, which is also the historical incident to which we owe our knowledge of the story. When Pansette asks his putative uncle for the money his property earned while he was away, Pierre at first takes it as a joke, then shows his distress at a request which introduced the mechanisms and legalisms of the marketplace into the bosom of his family. When Pansette goes on to explain that he also wants to sell one of his inherited fields in order to buy a better one lower in the valley, the pain on Pierre's face turns to fury. For the first time, he lends credence to the gossip about Pansette's identity. The next morning, Pierre tries to kill the impostor but is frustrated by Bertrande's intervention, so he files suit against Pansette in the king's court.

Part of the reason for the desperate character of the intergenerational struggle was that

LE RETOUR DE MARTIN GUERRE

the total resources available were perceived to be quite limited, as the population approached its pre-Black Plague level in the middle of the sixteenth century and peasants found themselves carving marginal holdings out of the encroaching forest. A time-honored tactic for converting scattered fields into a coherent and efficient farm was combination through marriage, as Bertrande explained to Judge Coras in our film. The marriage between Pierre Guerre and Raemonde de Rols throws the social meaning of the first one between Martin Guerre and Bertrande de Rols into sharper relief: both families were determined to combine their holdings, and thought the most effective way to do so was through marriage. The village of Tilh, from which Pansette came to Artigat, was but twenty miles or so from the Guerre/Rols farm but was much more thoroughly integrated into the developing cash economy. The positive side of that difference was Pansette's ability to increase their lands' yield, as Bertrande also remarked to Coras early in the film; the catastrophic side for Pansette was his failure to recognize how suspicious the family was of his new methods, particularly when they extended to the alienation of jealously guarded patrimony. Again, the effect of Pansette's unique masquerade was to bring the conflict over

differing economic models into an isolated village, and even into the heart of one of the leading households within it. We owe much of our detailed knowledge of these peasants' lives to the juxtaposition of this conflict with the normal ones between generations living under the same roof.

So the film is successful at showing the intensity of these conflicts; its principal failing is its attempt to mask the process by which we come to see it at all. We owe our knowledge of the story to the lengthy and erudite account of the investigating magistrate Jean de Coras, supplemented by shorter accounts written by fellow barristers who came to Toulouse to see how Coras and the other *parlementaires* of that court handled such a difficult case. Each of the peasants wanted the king's officers to find some part of the truth, but each also had something to hide and, in general, they were not at all open to outsiders' interest in their lives. Coras and his fellow barristers were divided among themselves, for instance along religious lines, but they shared a determination to find the truth amidst the competing claims to it, as proof of their importance to the Crown and the social order in general. The case turned quickly for them into a test of their ability to sweep away the obfuscations erected by these contentious villagers and find the truth they sought to hide (see Montaigne's "Des boyteux" [*Essais* III, xi]).

In this light, perhaps the most surprising thing about this episode is that we learn as much as we do about it. Acknowledging the divergences between the peasants' and the magistrates' interests, even by a device as simple as framing the film by Coras's narration, for instance, would have made some extraordinary convergences easier to see. Natalie Zemon Davis, the historical consultant to the film, found Coras's letters to his second wife, letters quite unusual in their conjugal passion for a man of his station and time, and suggests that his own experience of a marriage for love might have made Coras more sympathetic to Bertrande's attempt to bring off the same thing (see Davis's *Return of Martin Guerre* [Harvard, 1983]). This is no more than a suggestion on her part, and it is not the only one, but the reason Davis speculates at all is that she is trying to explain Coras's sympathy for Pansette and Bertrande, as unmistakable in his account as it is in the film.

The film-makers' appeal to history for a sense of depth is flawed, then, by their failure to make it explicit, but we can overcome this failing by taking account of an important divergence between the fiction of the film and the accounts of Coras and his fellow barristers: Bertrande did in fact join the suit against Pansette for imposture. The Bertrande of the magistrates' accounts gave notably weak testimony, but she never denied her suit as explicitly as she did in the film. Why did the historical Bertrande accept Pansette in the first place, and why did she turn against him even in a partial and half-hearted way at the end?

The first question evokes the *frisson* this story elicits whenever it is told: how could a wife mistake "le toucher de l'homme" even nine years later (Giraudoux found thirty-seven versions of the Amphitryon myth when he wrote his own)? In fact, there were powerful reasons in addition to her "besoin d'homme" for Bertrande to have been happy to see a potential husband in Pansette. There were five young women in the historical Guerre/Rols household, an old man, an old woman, and a boy. Bertrande was but one of the young women, unable effectively to protect her own independence from her uncle and her mother, or her boy Sanxi's claim to the land. Should she suddenly rediscover her husband and Sanxi's father, on the other hand, her status would soar to that of consort and mother to the presumptive heirs.

Moreover, she had the power to annul the arrangement simply by denouncing the newcomer as an impostor—providing of course that she did so immediately—giving her a power undreamed of by early modern peasant women. Under canon law, both partners had to agree to a marriage, but families exerted enormous pressure to secure acquiescence, and we have seen that both these families put great store by this marriage. Her situation gave Bertrande's words a weight they did not ordinarily carry, so she had the power to strike a bargain with this would-be husband on a far more equal basis than other women of her class and time. Coras gives us to understand in his account that Pansette and Bertrande fell deeply in love, but it is equally clear that

she had compelling economic and personal reasons to see her husband in Pansette.

Why, then, did she later deny him, however half-heartedly? Probably because, in contrast to her position when he first arrived, she had no room to maneuver after having accepted him for three years. She had to protect not only her son by Martin but the daughter she had had in the meantime with Pansette from the rest of her family. In order to protect her children she had, as she says in the film, to protect herself.

Let us return in conclusion to an examination of the way the film shows us the asking, and the answering of these very questions. At the climactic moment of the filmed trial, Coras (Roger Planchon) calls on Bertrande to testify definitively that the defendant is her long-lost husband. She does so, and another of the judges asks her how she can be so sure; Coras, circling her in his role as investigating magistrate like a bird of prey—or a camera—suggests that it is perhaps because Pansette knows things about her that only a husband knows of his wife. Bertrande assents and Coras, apparently satisfied, looks to his fellow judges to see if they are as well. This look makes explicit his sympathy for Bertrande; it makes him an intermediary between her and those who seek to know the most intimate details of her travails: the judges in the courtroom in Toulouse and, of course, the spectators in the darkened theater.

When Coras sees that his fellow *parlementaires* are not satisfied, he circles in closer yet and asks "Quoi, quels détails?" She answers, convincing the judges of the truth of her assertions and us that she is going to win her case. Bertrande's introduction of (perhaps spurious?) details of her sex life serves for the fictional magistrates as the final and convincing proof of her assertion; they pay for the prurience of their interests with their assent. Prurience is doubtless not altogether absent from our interest either, and we pay for it with the belief that she will win her case.

The final scene between Bertrande and Coras reveals the contradiction at the heart of the story, between the judge's capacity to see into lives so removed from his own and the peasants' struggle to conceal their lives from his prying eyes—and for that matter, between our desire to see and our fear of seeing. We have already noted that Coras serves as an intermediary between us and Bertrande during his questioning of her in the trial; when he questions her again for his own curiosity ("Pour que j'y voie clair"), she turns and looks him full in the face, then tells him the truth in excruciating detail. By contrast with her normal comportment, her look restores the social distance between them, and places him in the new role of stand-in for us in our wish to see her time of trial.

It was a slight exaggeration to have said that the film succeeds in making the bitterness of the conflicts between these peasants visible, because of the danger we noted at the outset that the conventionally beautiful art decoration would mask this very bitterness. All the same, it is at least clear that we may, through an attentive reading, gain an unusually intense insight into the intimate and everyday lives of the vast majority of Europeans almost five hundred years ago.

To make sense of the film itself, though, we need to read the trial and epilogue as a reenactment through the ways the characters look at each other of the way we look at them and their story. By doing so, moreover, we can complement our insight into lives very distant from our own with one into the nature and quality of that distance, and so gain a glimmering of the relationship between historical and aesthetic experience in general.

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THE REST OF THE YEAR'S FILM BOOKS

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We are grateful to readers who have responded to our request for comments on our book surveys, but further suggestions are always welcome. We intend to maintain our comprehensive scope, but will of necessity abbreviate many entries for works that seem of limited importance. Our aim is to return to our original coverage of the year's work in a single issue.

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History

HOLLYWOOD ON THE PALISADES
A Filmography of Silent Features Made in Fort Lee, New Jersey, 1903-1907

By Rita Ecke Altomara. New York and London: Garland, 1983. $38.00.

Edwin S. Porter's 1905 Edison film called *The White Caps* gives the viewer a range of Fort Lee vistas. The White Caps are a little Klan-like vigilante group who tar and feather a wife-beater and then ride him out of town on a rail. Settings include country roads, a copse, and two angles on a suburban house. When Griffith chose to film a Western (*The Girl and the Outlaw*) early in 1908, he took Florence Lawrence and the Biograph crew to Coytesville, an even tinier community that had been absorbed into Fort Lee. Parts of *The Lonely Villa, His Trust, The Battle,* and *The New York Hat* were also made there. The locations were within a one-day trip from Manhattan and provided settings adequate to many kinds of stories as film-makers increasingly forsook studio flats and furniture.

Rather than travel, an impressive number of fledgling companies simply settled in Fort Lee: Eclair in 1911, Victor (founded by Florence Lawrence and her husband in 1912), Champion as early as 1910. With *her* husband, Alice Guy Blaché established Solax there. Lewis J. Selznick rented from Solax to produce for his Clara Kimball Young Film Corporation with David O. Selznick as treasurer. Samuel Goldfish rented Solax and the larger Universal Film Manufacturing Company studios on Main Street. Artcraft, a spinoff from Famous Players-Lasky, sometimes worked out of Peerless Studio, and William Fox rented space also. Metro Pictures leased in Fort Lee and released other Fort Lee productions.

Trust affiliates and non-Trust independents worked side-by-side if not together. Universal combined with Eclair, Champion and Nester in 1912 and allied their collective interests with other independents like Imp. Champion had settled in Coytesville in a building camouflaged to deceive the Trust's detectives.

So concentrated a center of film-making easily qualifies Fort Lee as the first studio nexus in movie history. Many production figures soon expanded their careers in California. Frances Marion worked for Lewis Selznick's World Pictures. Alan Dwan and Bronco Billy Anderson directed for the Clara Kimball Young Film Corporation. Maurice Tourneur and Victor Flemming (later Fleming) worked for Artcraft, as did John Emerson and Anita Loos. Josef von Sternberg apprenticed as editor, writer and assistant director for World, where Frances Marion remembers meeting Joe Stern in 1914 as an official "greeter."

Much of the above information can be culled from an excellent research work by Paul C. Spehr of the Film Department at the Library of Congress, *The Movies Begin: Making Movies in New Jersey 1887-1920* (New York: Morgan and Morgan, 1977). Rita Altomara's work is confined to chronological listings of film credits for actors, actresses (twenty-eight in all), and for nine directors including Griffith, Dwan, Blaché, Tourneur and Raoul Walsh, who worked for the Goldwyn Company, along with Reginald Barker and Ralph Ince whose works are not included. The Garland book also provides several illustrations, mostly publicity stills. As intended, the work is a useful reference source for period and place, although its price keeps it away from very many other hands. Given budgets, libraries may be hesitating these days too. Fort Lee's story has yet to emerge in any style blending people, place and event, but Spehr and Altomara combine nicely thus far, Spehr less expensively. —JOHN FELL

SEEING IS BELIEVING
How Hollywood Taught Us to Stop Worrying and Love the Fifties

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ting in. Without the benefit of Biskind's careful construction and preparation, the unwary reader who plunges in midstream is bound to be bewildered or dismayed by many of the political labels, whereby *Thieves Highway,* for instance, is designated as a "right-wing film," or *High Noon* and *The Blob* as "radical films." Even in the Introduction, which tends to be more cautious than the rest of the book, several eyebrows are likely to be raised by the following sentence: "The films of Robert Aldrich can usually be counted on to be somewhere on the left, just as the films of Elia Kazan are frequently in the middle, while those of John Ford are to the right of his and those of Alfred Hitchcock are to the right of his."

While nothing in *Seeing is Believing* quite succeeds in eliminating all the booby-traps contained in the above declaration, the book is a lot more reasoned and reasonable than any sort of scattershot spot-checking might suggest. Examining the period that extends "roughly from Harry Truman's victory in 1948 to the beginning of the Kennedy presidency in 1960," Biskind is mainly concerned with the degree to which Hollywood movies of this era "reflected not one but several warring ideologies, so that it is possible to speak of radical (left- and right-wing) as well as mainstream films." Readers of *Film Quarterly* who have already encountered Biskind's excellent political dissections of *Rebel Without a Cause* and *On the Waterfront* in these pages as early case studies in this enterprise (see the Fall 1974 and Fall 1975 issues, respectively)—both of which have been partially adapted into the present book, shorn of their original polemical contexts but still detailed and persuasive—will be pleased to discover that he is equally sharp about *Twelve Angry Men, Them!, The Thing, The Day the Earth Stood Still* and *Broken Arrow,* among other films, and that he has constructed his analyses in relation to an overall system of categories that makes the book's main argument judicious as well as consistent in relation to its own special terms.

For many readers, however, the greatest problem posed by Biskind's book relates to these terms themselves. To establish what he means by fifties ideology in relation to such concepts as consensus, dissent, minorities, sex roles and delinquency, Biskind has depended almost exclusively on American commentators of roughly the same period. Thus while neither Marx nor Freud are to be found in his index, David Reisman gets a dozen citations, Daniel Bell and William H. Whyte, Jr., nine apiece, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., eight, William F. Buckley, Jr., six, Lionel Trilling and Robert Warshow four apiece, and Eric Fromm three. And because all eight of these latter writers are mainly cited as unmediated authorities rather than as figures who were themselves shaped by fifties ideology, the system that Biskind constructs is by necessity a rather circumscribed one.

By and large, the emphasis is on plots rather than on aesthetic effects through other means, which leads in certain cases to debatable interpretations. Biskind categorizes Nicholas Ray's *In a Lonely Place* as a conservative film while I view it as liberal-masochistic, and the difference between our interpretations has less to do with storylines than with the ambiguity of the precise role of the Humphrey Bogart figure in relation to the plot. (A comparable difference of readings cropped up in Biskind's original treatment of *Rebel Without a Cause* in *Film Quarterly,* when he challenged my description of Ray's *Bigger Than Life* as "a profoundly upsetting exposure of middle-class aspirations" by treating its hero's behavior as a cautionary warning rather than as a troubled site for audience identification.) More generally, as social/political commentator who is frequently concerned with issues of consensus, Biskind usually seems all too willing to adopt the values of an aesthetic consensus whereby his own aesthetic standards become indistinguishable from those of the mass audience. When we read that the "resolution of *Red River,* the shoot-out that didn't happen, made good ideology, but a bad ending; it displeased reviewers at the time and has never found favor with traditionalists," the implication seems inescapable that Biskind situates his own aesthetic judgments squarely with the traditionalists and 1948 reviewers.

To be fair, however, Biskind is quite capable of making acute aesthetic observations that go well beyond the range of status quo reviewing. (If he weren't, the very undertaking of this book would be impossible, for however exclusively his focus seems trained on ideology rather than aesthetics, his grasp of

the former invariably necessitates a grasp of the latter, whether acknowledged or not.) In his excellent treatment of *The Thing,* for instance, he gets a lot of interesting mileage out of a match cut from Pat Hendry (Kenneth Tobey) jokily tied up by Nikki Nicholson (Margaret Sheridan) to a block of ice bound by rope: "Inside the ice is the Thing, just as inside Hendry is the id. The ice accidentally melts, and the Thing gets loose, in the same way that Hendry escapes Nikki's bonds."

Aiming to be witty as well as precise, Biskind writes a fluid and readable prose that is marred, to my taste, only by an excessive reliance on familiar catch-phrases to summarize his points. The problem with this device is that, through repetition, one is often waiting impatiently for the second shoe to fall (to venture a catch-phrase of my own). After establishing that "women in centrist sci-fi are either one of the boys or like children" and that *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* is anti-centrist, he adds that, in the latter film, "it is women and children first." When "one of Hendry's men [in *The Thing*] pokes a revolver in his face, Carrington learns that power grows out of the barrel of a gun." After the hero's idyllic domestic situation in *The Big Heat* is established, we learn that "into every utopia a little rain must fall." Following the account of a poker game that relates to Lagana, the villain of the same film, we're told that "Langana's game is the only game in town." On the next page, after noting that the hero Bannion "intuitively does the Right Thing," Biskind can't resist adding, "In his heart he knows he's right." In *Blackboard Jungle,* "Dadier has the will, but is there a way?"; for Ethan Edwards in *The Searchers,* Debbie is "better off dead than red."

Some of these pirouettes have interesting and suggestive points to make—that *The Big Heat* is pre-Goldwater, that *The Searchers* is a Cold War film—so they can't be written off as gratuitous. But the fact that Biskind wheels out these clichés so often tends to trivialize the rhythm of his arguments; the purely formalistic pleasure of an idea clicking into place via a catch-phrase occasionally overpowers the force of the idea itself.

Also regrettable are a few glaring factual errors. Apart from subtracting a *d* from Budd Boetticher's name and adding a *The* to *Cat People* (unless these are proofreading errors), Biskind argues that the staggering death-walk of Tolly Devlin (Cliff Robertson) at the end of Fuller's *Underworld USA* "was lifted by Godard for the celebrated close of *Breathless,*" when a look at the dates of the films makes this impossible; even less plausibly, we're told that Norman Bates appears "in the last shot" of *Psycho* as his mother, "wig, dress, and all," which misdescribes that film's penultimate shots as well.

More generally, though, Biskind is quite attentive to the films he describes, and if one questions, say, the status of Mercedes McCambridge as a "proto-lesbian" in *Johnny Guitar,* or that Angie Dickinson "is transformed from call girl to housewife" in *Rio Bravo,* these are more matters of nuance than textual differences. At its best, *Seeing is Believing* exposes a lot of interesting subtexts to fifties movies. (I was particularly struck by the detailed description of Delmer Daves's 1950 *Broken Lance,* a movie whose treatment of Indians uncannily approximates the treatment of South Sea islanders in Daves's subsequent film of 1951, *Bird of Paradise.* Having examined the ideology of the latter film in *Moving Places,* I was intrigued to discover that however radically different our methodologies might be, Biskind and I have substantially come up with the same analysis.) While the juggling of such terms as "left-wing" and "right-wing" inevitably backs Biskind into certain corners—such as when he labels one of Jim Stark's choices at the end of *Rebel Without a Cause* as "the left-, or perhaps right-wing solution"—their cumulative impact and meaning are nevertheless enlightening, and some of the movies described, *Rebel* included, are not likely to look the same again.

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FROM HESTER STREET TO HOLLYWOOD
The Jewish-American Stage and Screen

Edited by Sarah Blacher Cohen. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983. $22.50.

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treatment is perfunctory and the effect mainly cheerleading, e.g., "Out of the remnants of Hester Street and the ashes of the Holocaust the Joan Miklin Silvers and the Josh Waletzkys have caused the phoenix of Jewish creativity to rise again."

The essays themselves are a mixed bag, often expressing academic straining to squeeze some cultural and literary profundity out of recalcitrant material. The result is usually rather superficial description of writers' lives and summaries of works, pumped up with overblown comments. Somehow the underlying significance and appeal of the *Jewish* connection is intended to give the volume some weight.

Actually, most of the essays relate to the stage, featuring Jewish writers and performers like Elmer Rice, Clifford Odets, Fanny Brice, Sophie Tucker, Arthur Miller, Lillian Hellman, and Neil Simon. (If you think Neil Simon isn't rich material for in-depth literary-cultural analysis, you're right.) The little that does touch on film is shallow in analysis and exaggerated in significance, e.g., "Mel Brooks and the Cinema of Exhaustion."

The subject deserves systematic treatment rather than the glossing touch of random collections like this. —ALLEN GRAUBARD

BRITISH CINEMA HISTORY

James Curran and Vincent Porter, eds. Totawa, NJ: Barnes and Noble, 1983. $32.50.

Revisionist film historians find movie history too involved with movies. They believe their corrective work must proceed essay by essay, composed by specialist wisdom, foregrounding economics, institutional structure, audience study and ideology: what's been neglected until now. Thus *British History Today* combines surveys and case studies, interspersed with propaganda, sex roles, censorship and capitalist financing.

An interesting collection results, sometimes retracing old ground (*Rank's Attempt on the American Market 1944-9*), more often characterized by unfamiliar subjects (*The New Road to Progress: The Use and Production of Films by the Labour Movement, 1929-39*) or applications of familiar methodology to different content (*Women, Realism and Reality in British Films, 1943-53*).

Anthologies that assume history's mantle share problems of consistency and inclusiveness. It's too bad that a book like this can't be titled *Some Aspects of British Film History*. Writers taking different cuts at the same material will necessarily disagree. Such contradictions ought, of course, to be rendered as visible as possible, the better to rethink contradictory methodologies, but revisionist history is also inclined toward the posture that it substantively replaces the old, like a queened pawn.

In consequence, the very differences on which individual study rests appear as chinks in an armor of common cause. Examples: Film's repertory of technique is tied to modernism's rejection of bourgeois forms (*British Film History: New Perspectives*), but the following essays largely build on the bourgeois character of British film. The "taste" of British film is seen to reflect British class structure, or at least a class view of class structure (*Film Entertainment as Ideology and Pleasure*). Yet "taste" explains the relative appeals of British films as export (*Rank's Attempt on the American Market 1944-9*). The shaping of a film in production is personalized (*Creativity at Ealing Studios and Hammer Films*); the shaping of a film is explained through genre conventions (*The James Bond Films: Conditions of Production*).

If movies have been overemphasized in past film history, they run no such risk at present. No title appears in *British Cinema History* until page 47, where *Rescued by Rover* illustrates a point about distribution, as Universal's *Hunchback of Notre Dame* refers to English patriotism on p. 60 and *The Private Life of Henry VIII* evidences overseas success (p. 67). These three make up a totality of movies mentioned in Parts I and II of the four-part anthology.

The book includes an extensive, if somewhat insular bibliography, consisting largely of British publications, so that (to cite random examples) Martin Sopocy's thorough study of James Williamson (*Cinema Journal,* Fall 1978) isn't mentioned, nor Georges Sadoul's *Histoire générale du cinéma,* nor the *Film Quarterly* (Winter 1961-62) issue devoted to Humphrey Jennings. A semblance of unifying concepts may sometimes be imposed on an-

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—JOHN FELL

FILM BEFORE GRIFFITH

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Intended mainly for courses in film history, this volume presents essays that look anew at production, distribution, and exhibition circumstances that characterized popular motion pictures from 1896 until roughly 1908. A new generation of scholars has begun to establish more reliable foundations on which integrated historical visions can be freshly constructed. Some recent work asks us radically to readjust previous perceptions of film's narrative patterns. What were thought to be syntactical "mistakes" are reappraised as alternative approaches to problems of space and time. The movies' first decade proves finally to present a developing sophistication that raised the curtain for D. W. Griffith's debut. (Since this is also a UC Press publication, we give it only a brief summary, not a full review.)

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THE AMERICAN MOVIE INDUSTRY
The Business of Motion Pictures

Edited by Gorham Kindem. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982. $30.00 cloth, $1.95 paper.

Kindem asserts in his preface that many of the case studies he has assembled are seminal works in the field. However, his 18 selections comprise a limited anthology of four case studies and 14 essays. The volume is marred beyond rehabilitation by unacknowledged abridgements, biased presentation, questionable standards of documentation (including restructured footnotes), and such limited coverage as to make one wonder about the rationale for the volume in the first place.

The case study method, says Webster's, deals with "accumulated case histories that are analyzed with a view toward formulating general principles," whereas a monograph tends to stand on its own as one relatively small, well-documented fragment of accumulated knowledge. A case study analyzes a historical event, a landmark legal case, or an important technical development from which broad conclusions may be drawn. The conclusions to be drawn from Kindem's "case study" collection are unclear, despite rambling prefatory allegations regarding the volume's almost limitless instructional application.

One of the collection's flaws is the inclusion of derivative work that does not merit case study status. The 14 essays are characterized by limited scope, numerous secondary references, and self-serving citations to other authors included in this volume. The four case studies are interesting, valid, appropriately exhaustive, and deal with primary materials. Their balance and scope, however, leave much to be desired. In this volume devoted to detailing "The Business of Motion Pictures," the four essays in Part Six, "America's Role in the International Film Industry," deal exclusively with the post-World War II period and primarily with Great Britain, Western Europe and Canada, the latter often considered part of the domestic US box office. Latin America, Asia and Africa are generally ignored.

Narrow distribution of authorship is evident as well. Three essays are by the editor, three by Douglas Gomery, and two by Robert C. Allen. Janet Staiger attributes her essay's genesis to a Gomery seminar. Gomery and Allen are collaborators, while Allen and Kindem teach in the same department at the University of North Carolina.

Certainly there is, *a priori,* nothing wrong with anthologizing essays written by a closely related group. However, individuals working together, utilizing common research facilities and interacting in similar situations tend to lack the stimulation diversity may bring. Considering the materials available, the volume

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is inbred. The extent of inquiry the title promises is not achieved as a small group has forced their work into a narrow theoretical framework. Numerous authors rather than numerous essays by a few authors would have helped. As it is, the book has the flavor of recycled graduate essays intermixed with some mature work.

In addition to narrow topical coverage and limited authorship, Kindem's selections are readily accessible in any major library, with the exception of an essay apparently written by the editor for this volume (Chapter 4) and Frederick Stuart's study.* A few hours at the University of Michigan Library in Ann Arbor were sufficient to locate 13 of these essays. A large proportion of the volume's contents are to be found in widely available journals. So it is difficult to endorse this volume's scope and justify such an expensive paperback.

The volume's most glaring fault is extensive, unacknowledged abridgments. Kindem's gratitude to "Joyce Atwood for her meticulous editing of the manuscript" hardly prepares the reader for the actual revisions, which range from minor to wholesale. Some may be helpful but there is no indication that extensive abridgments have been made. This violates every scholarly rule imaginable and is highly improper.

Kindem's most flagrant abuse of editorial prerogative is in Chapter 3 where Ralph Cassady's study of monopolistic practices in early motion picture production and distribution is partially reproduced, extensively edited, and prejudicially presented. The original had 384 footnotes, the reprint 132. The majority of those 384 were additional information. In most cases, Cassady's citations were to primary sources, although he does reference much of the secondary literature. Cassady's study, in the main, was based on a review of the voluminous, not readily available judicial records of early film history, particularly *United States v. Motion Picture Patents Company*. Hence his case study provides the closest view one can obtain without repeating research possible in only three locations (UCLA Law Library, Princeton University Library, Federal Records Center). Therefore, it is imperative to present the case study as originally published.

Not so in this instance. Kindem condensed the first eight paragraphs and 29 footnotes to three paragraphs and three footnotes. Other extensive surgery has been performed. Some of the missing 252 footnotes have been incorporated in the text; many have disappeared completely. Ironically, while some factual footnotes were eliminated others which contain conclusions were elevated to textual status.

Not content to tamper with Cassady's landmark study, Kindem also singles it out to receive an argumentative afterword, 7½ pages in which Jeanne Thomas Allen avers: "Because his evidence, which is mentioned in the text as well as in the notes, is extensive, the reader can measure the validity of Cassady's conclusions against the evidence he provides." How does one measure validity with omitted materials?

This prejudicial presentation of Cassady's work is particularly ironic since Gomery's three essays have apologetic "Afterwords" in which the author thanks the editor for the opportunity to put his graduate essays in proper perspective. Somewhat perversely, Kindem omitted the evaluatory critiques originally appended to Simon Whitney's "Motion Pictures," one of 21 anti-trust case studies in a two-volume set.*

As with all scholarly materials, case studies need to adhere scrupulously to the highest standards of research. Breadth of inquiry, accurate documentation, verified primary materials, limited secondary and corollary references—all are important standards. Reprints should be presented exactly as originally published. If not, great care should be taken to warn the reader that texts have been abridged. Wholesale abridgments of the kind we have here raise suspicion of efforts to sustain preconceived theoretical positions.

Unfortunately, Kindem's questionable editorial policies, biased structure and narrow range make this volume so flawed that it cannot be recommended under any circumstances.

*Chapter 13. After some searching, it appears that this case study is a 1960 Ph. D. dissertation (Columbia University) available in an Arno Press reprint of the original typescript, 1976; not 1975 as noted by Kindem. It has been heavily abridged.

*Simon N. Whitney, *Antitrust Policies: American Experience in Twenty Industries,* New York, 1958, The Twentieth Century Fund. The chapter, "Motion Pictures," was critiqued by Robert L. Wright, lawyer, Washington, D.C., formerly with Antitrust Division, Department of Justice and by Michael Conant, Assistant Professor of Business Law, School of Business Administration, University of California, Berkeley.

Meticulous attention to detail may be tiresome, but it certainly does wonders for one's ethical appeal. It is a requirement *sine qua non* for any volume worthy of space on the library shelves. As George Bernard Shaw advised the young critic, "Get your facts right first: that is the foundation of all style."* It is also the foundation of valid scholarship.

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*George Bernard Shaw, *Advice to a Young Critic,* New York, 1955, 13, as quoted in Jacques Barzun and Henry F. Graff, *The Modern Researcher,* p. 49, revised edition (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1970). I should have looked up the original source, but all these citations look impressive.

Barnouw, Erik. *Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1983. $8.95 paper. Barnouw has added 20 pages of material on the recent explosion of highly political documentaries to this standard work.

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Beardsley, Charles. *Hollywood's Master Showman: The Legendary Sid Grauman.* New York/London: Cornwall Books, 1983. $25.00. Not surprisingly, Grauman's favorite organ solo was "Pomp and Circumstance," and his gaudy "Chinese" theater achieved a degree of kitschy extravagance totally unmarred by the architectural class—derivative but real—of the great Fox houses. But Grauman had a remarkable flair for publicity, and his stage-show "prologues" to movies were evidently impressive productions. His Metropolitan theater was a 4,000-seat monster using advanced reinforced concrete trusses; he also had the Egyptian, and earlier the Rialto and Million Dollar. At all of them he put on glamorous premières. As Gloria Swanson said of the silent era, "We had faces then!" They also had theaters, and showmen to run them. —E.C.

Hirschhorn, Clive. *The Universal Story.* New York: Crown, 1983. $35.00. Studio "stories" are yet one more way to slice the movie-history pie. But *The Universal Story* is really *many* stories, many movies —hundreds of the things crammed into one big book. Its appeal is very similar to that of general illustrated histories like *A Pictorial History of the Talkies.* It's a testament not to unity, but to diversity. It sprawls—or, as the flyleaf boasts: "over 1,200 illustrations." That's a lot of illustrating. And most of the 2,600-plus movies included get thumbnail descriptive sketches. What more could one ask for? Well, maybe a story, *one* story. The actual *history* of Universal and Universal-International is confined to about 20 pages of introductory sketches (out of 400 pages) to the book's various sections ("1927-1936, Laemmle's Last Decade," etc.). A better title for Hirschhorn's book would be "The Whole Universal Catalog"—what it lacks in continuity, it certainly makes up for in comprehensiveness. —DON WILLIS

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Martin has done more than superficial research, consulting in France with one of the finest scholars (Michel Marie) and with one of the most personally knowledgeable (Marie Epstein). His book is divided into sections which trace the development of French film in the thirties from a (cursory) look at the silent era, to the installation of sound, then through various topical divisions ("Empire and Exoticism," "Film and Society"—the longest chapter, which includes a discussion of the Popular Front—and "Saturday Night at the Movies"). The concluding chapter is disappointing, as it's simply a very brief survey of influences; in fact, the impact of French film is much farther reaching than this superficial catalogue of details would indicate. The book relies too much on plot summaries (necessary for readers who are generally unfamiliar with the work), but its inclusion of discussions about literally unknown films (*Itto, L'Etrange Monsieur Victor, Remorques, Le Grand Jeu,* to name only a few), plus a very useful chronological listing of those major films easily available in the US—not to mention Martin's thoroughness, desire for inclusiveness, and commitment to making information available —make it an important contribution to film studies.

—SANDY FLITTERMAN

Perry, George. *Forever Ealing: A Celebration of the Great British Film Studio.* Salem, NH: Michael Joseph, 1982. $17.95. As Peter Ustinov notes in his charming foreword, "Everything about Ealing was defiantly small," and *Passport to Pimlico,* a borough-separatist comedy, remains as perhaps the epitome of its brash and original style. In a nation that has not normally been considered a major fountain of cinematic energy, Ealing produced an impressive series of lasting works: *Dead of Night,*

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Martin has done more than superficial research, consulting in France with one of the finest scholars (Michel Marie) and with one of the most personally knowledgeable (Marie Epstein). His book is divided into sections which trace the development of French film in the thirties from a (cursory) look at the silent era, to the installation of sound, then through various topical divisions ("Empire and Exoticism," "Film and Society"—the longest chapter, which includes a discussion of the Popular Front—and "Saturday Night at the Movies"). The concluding chapter is disappointing, as it's simply a very brief survey of influences; in fact, the impact of French film is much farther reaching than this superficial catalogue of details would indicate. The book relies too much on plot summaries (necessary for readers who are generally unfamiliar with the work), but its inclusion of discussions about literally unknown films (*Itto, L'Etrange Monsieur Victor, Remorques, Le Grand Jeu,* to name only a few), plus a very useful chronological listing of those major films easily available in the US—not to mention Martin's thoroughness, desire for inclusiveness, and commitment to making information available —make it an important contribution to film studies.

—SANDY FLITTERMAN

Perry, George. *Forever Ealing: A Celebration of the Great British Film Studio.* Salem, NH: Michael Joseph, 1982. $17.95. As Peter Ustinov notes in his charming foreword, "Everything about Ealing was defiantly small," and *Passport to Pimlico,* a borough-separatist comedy, remains as perhaps the epitome of its brash and original style. In a nation that has not normally been considered a major fountain of cinematic energy, Ealing produced an impressive series of lasting works: *Dead of Night,*

Kind Hearts and Coronets, Whisky Galore/Tight Little Island, The Titfield Thunderbolt, The Man in the White Suit, The Lavender Hill Mob, The Ladykillers (many of them, of course, starring Alec Guinness). Perry's study is strongest on the organizational and business history of Ealing, and his commentaries on the films do not generally measure up in subtlety to Charles Barr's in *Ealing Studios.* Nonetheless, this is a thoughtful and valuable book. Copiously illustrated; filmography. —E.C.

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Julianne Burton, *The New Latin American Cinema, An Annotated Bibliography,* 1960–1980. New York: Smyrna Press, 1983. $4.00. Thanks are due to Smyrna Press for publishing this up-dated version of Burton's valuable annotated bibliography of works on Latin American cinema. It is an excellent research tool, especially for the student and teacher just getting into this fascinating area of film. Most of the best English-language articles are in hard to find film and scholarly periodicals. Finding them without such a bibliography would be an arduous task. Unfortunately, the bibliography only goes up to 1980; important articles and books have appeared since 1980 and some of the listed periodicals have disappeared as well. Nonetheless, the addition of a section on US Hispanic cinema and an annotated list of Latin American film publications adds to this bibliography's value. For the most part the annotations are clear and to the point, though I often find Burton too judgmental for such a small bibliography. And her often used criticism, "many factual errors," is not very useful without our knowing what the errors are. Certainly study and scholarship includes checking and cross-checking. I hope no one decides to skip a specific article because of such comments, for most of the listed articles are full of valuable information and insight that can help a reader on his/her way.

—JOHN HESS

Foreman, Alexa L. *Women in Motion.* Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Press, 1983. $19.95 cloth, $9.95 paper. Annotated listings of the work of women directors, avant-garde film-makers, editor, and screenwriters; with rental source information. Unfortunately, no information is given about the women themselves, many of whom are

little known. Still, a useful compilation for anybody doing programming in women's studies or related areas. —E.C.

Garfield, Brian. *Western Films, A Complete Guide.* New York: Rawson Associates, 1982. $24.95. Designed to be an encyclopedia of western film, this "complete guide" is a disappointment. Each entry includes but a partial list of credits, forcing the reader to look elsewhere for a complete list. More damaging is the omission of an index, so the book may be used only through a film's title. Garfield's nearly 2,000 entries include partial credits (director, screenwriters, original story source and a selective cast list), a clear, concise plot summary, insightful historical and production data and mostly intelligent evaluative comments. The essays, which fill the first 100 of the 386 pages, offer no new insights into the genre and are generally opinion rather than information, offering a self-indulgent tirade against the "auteur theory." *Western Films* could have been the basic text on the subject. Instead it will merely inhibit another publisher from producing a more helpful resource.

—MARY WHITELEY

Halliwell, Leslie. *Halliwell's Film Guide,* 2nd ed. New York: Scribner's, 1983. $16.95 paper. This edition has grown to more than 1,200 pages, covering 10,000 films (the TV films have been taken out and put into Halliwell's *Teleguide*), including a few silent classics and a few foreign films. Thumbnail plot sketches, casts, credits, ratings. —E.C.

_____. *Halliwell's Filmgoer's Companion* (7th Edition). New York: Scribner's, 1984. $10.95 paperback. Adds about a thousand new items, and corrects many errors, though some will still regard it with suspicion. —E.C.

Kinnard, Roy. *Fifty Years of Serial Thrills.* Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1983. $15.00. Brief essays on the approaches taken at Mascot, Republic, Columbia, Universal, etc., followed by listings of credits. —E.C.

Leff, Leonard J. *Film Plots: Scene-by-scene Narrative Outlines for Feature Film Study, Vol. 1.* Ann Arbor: Pierian Press, 1983. $49.95. This project might seem totally superfluous at first thought, but film prints are fugitive (and sometimes defective) and memory is remarkably unreliable. Hence, if you are thinking of writing something about any of the 67 films covered in this volume—almost all standard mainline classics—you might avoid embarrassment and stimulate thought by checking through Leff's scene summaries. Looking at narrative structures in this highly compressed way can be intriguing too: *It Happened One Night* has 59 scenes, *Annie Hall* 80, *The Lady Eve* 64, *The Last Laugh* 108, *The Wild Bunch* 136. Dreyer's *Passion of Joan of Arc* scores lowest with 17. —E.C.

Limbacher, James L. *Sexuality in World Cinema,* 2 volumes. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1983. $72.50. Well known for his authoritative *Feature Films on 8mm, 16mm, and Videotape,* Limbacher now unlimbers a distinctly novel side of his professional personality. These monster volumes total 1,500 pages of listings and annotations of films with explicit sexual content, and they are done with considerable wit on the whole, sinking to conventional nerditude only rarely. (He begins Vol. I with a self-interview and a foreword allegedly from his mother.) Many of the films described are not particularly notable for sexual peculiarities; Limbacher's level of attention can be gauged by the entry for *Bali* (1971): "Ugo Liberatore directed this languorous tale of a nymphomaniac, a homosexual, and a native mistress and that's about as exciting as it gets in this German-Italian co-production." But a wearying amount of weirdness is duly chronicled. Some famous names appear unexpectedly: "*Games Girls Play* (1975). The great Jack Arnold directed this less-than-great soft-core exploitation film." And there are some dumb mistakes: "*L'Avventura* (1961). Michelangelo Antonioni's puzzling movie is still among the most irritating movies of all time, with its mistresses, prostitutes, and infidelity among the rich. What was Monica Vitti thinking about? Did she die or not? And if you think this one was puzzling, try sitting through *Red Desert.*" So okay, subtlety is not Limbacher's strong point. And sometimes things seem to have gone astray in production, like the entry for the Hawks *Big Sleep* (or didn't that bookstore scene get to Limbacher?); we get only the 1978 one directed by Michael Winner. Still, a curiosity for information pack-rats, perhaps useful for programmers, and mildly titillating. There are even occasional flashes for film scholars: it seems Dovjenko (here spelled Dovschenko) originally had a nude scene in *Earth,* which was eliminated by both Soviet and American censors. —E.C.

Lloyd, Ann and Graham Fuller, eds. *The Illustrated Who's Who of the Cinema.* New York: MacMillan, 1983. $65.00. Containing nearly 2,500 biographical notes, this volume is also heavily illustrated (usually with posed publicity shots, many in color). High points of each person's career are listed at end of the entries. The selection is catholic and even-handedly international, including a few people whose careers were peripheral to film (e.g., Pearl Bailey), and the annotations are brisk and sensible. —E.C.

Magill, Frank N., ed. *Magill's Cinema Annual, 1982.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Salem Press, 1982. This volume, which covers 1981 films, is part of the very ambitious Salem Press project that includes the 13-volume (so far) *Magill's Survey of Cinema* (reviewed elsewhere in this issue). Contained here are brief reviews of 80 new films plus 20 older titles (even including four silents), prefaced by credits for technical personnel and cast. The bulk of most of the reviews is a recounting of the story line but generally more interesting films get more interesting treatment. There is also a section of obituaries. —E.C.

Maltin, Leonard. *Selected Short Subjects.* New York: Da Capo Press, 1983. Paper, $12.95. Another of Leonard Maltin's forays into virtually uncharted filmic territory, this is a reissue of his 1972 *The Great Movie Shorts,* and it's good to have it back. As he states in his preface, "The talkie short has been pretty much ignored." *Selected Short Subjects,* along with Maltin's "companion" volume on cartoons, *Of Mice and Magic* (McGraw-Hill, 1980), are welcome correctives to this general neglect. —DON WILLIS

Morsberger, Robert E., Stephen O. Lesser and Randall Clark, eds. *American Screenwriters: Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 26.* Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1984. $80.00. Each entry in this first of two volumes is by a different writer, and they are more extensive than the usual encyclopedia entry, including some biographical information as well as summaries of each writer's work; however, they are generally stronger on stating the facts than on interpreting them—as is no doubt proper in a reference work. The coverage is catholic in both periods and types of writers: Zoe Akins to Colin Higgins, Preston Sturges to Dalton Trumbo. Valuable for any serious film collection. —E.C.

Quinlan, David. *An Illustrated Guide to Film Directors.* Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble, 1983. $28.50. The particular virtue of Quinlan's collection of brief sketches of directors and their work is its inclusion of many who don't figure in such alternate sources as David Thomson's *Biographical Dictionary of Film* or the *Oxford Companion to Film.* (The J's alone, to stick to a small sample, deal with Pat Jackson, Charles Jarrott, Leigh Jason, Harmon Jones, Rupert Julian, and Nathan Juran, as well as Jancso, Jennings, and Lamont and Nunnally Johnson.) Quinlan is most sympathetic to mainline American and British directors, but he includes a great many foreign directors as well and exhibits tolerance if not enthusiasm for Cassavetes, Schrader, Roeg, and even Romero. —E.C.

Shearer, Benjamin F. and Marilyn Huxford. *Communications and Society.* Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983. $35.00. Unannotated listings of some 2,700 books and articles on the functions of the media (including print) in mass society. —E.C.

Slide, Anthony. *A Collector's Guide to Movie Memorabilia, with Prices.* Wallace-Homestead Book Co., 1912 Grand Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50309, 1983. $12.95. What's worth collecting why, and what it's probably worth today. The field is treacherous: a Reagan *Bedtime for Bonzo* poster that went for $600 in 1980 is down to $200 now. And current stars are not always obliging to autograph hunters; if you happen to have one from Alan Alda, hang onto it—it could be as rare as one of Garbo's. —E.C.

Truitt, Evelyn Mack. *Who Was Who on Screen, Illustrated Edition.* New York & London: Bowker, 1984. A condensed version of the third edition of *Who Was Who on Screen,* this volume lists approximately 3,100 screen personalities (primarily American, British, French and German) who died between 1905 and 1982. Many bit players are included. —E.C.

Weard, George. *Gone With The Wind: A Legend Endures.* Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin. 1983. $14.95. Texas has acquired the "mountain" of archival materials that David Selznick accumulated, and this volume, prepared as a catalog for an exhibition, is a sort of sampler of the immense store of memos, photographs, and business documents now available to scholars at Austin. —E.C.

Technical

Dunn, Linwood G., ASC, Concept and Supervision. *The ASC Treasury of Visual Effects.* Hollywood: America Society of Cinematographers, 1983. $29.95. Much of the expert material in this volume is drawn from issues of *American Cinematographer,* and most of the contributors are old ASC hands. Here you can find out how to blow up buildings, simulate earthquakes, dynamite dams, simulate sea battles, animate monsters, recreate vanished historical scenes, etc., all in workable technical detail. ("There is an empirical rule governing the camera speed used for various scale miniatures. The rule is that the camera speed be the square root of the scale; i.e., a 3/4-inch-to-one-foot scale miniature is 1/16th full size and will require a four times normal camera speed; i.e., the square root of 16.") Most of the book is about relatively recent work, including *The Invisible Man, The Empire Strikes Back,* and *Tron.* Essential background for anybody in the business, and intriguing for all fans of visual thrills. —E.C.

Goodell, Gregory. *Independent Feature Film Production: A Complete Guide from Concept to Distribution.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982. $17.95. A highly readable and informative survey of the mechanics of feature film production, covering such essentials as legal structuring, financing, preproduction, production, postproduction, distribution, and marketing. Goodell provides the film student with a firm fundamental beginning. This type of book has been a long time coming, and it certainly achieves its ambitions.

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Rosen, Frederic W. *Shooting Video.* Boston, London: Focal Press, 1984. $10.95 paperback. Handy advice on using your home video recorder for fun and profit (like shooting weddings)—a mixture of elementary technical information and directorial hints. —E.C.

Wiese, Michael. *The Independent Film & Videomakers Guide.* Westport, CT: Michael Wiese Film Productions, 1984. $14.95 paperback. This is an expanded version of *The Independent Filmmaker's Guide,* Wiese's excellent introduction to the perils of organizing, financing, producing, selling and promoting independent film and video work. Special added attraction is a massive list of video distributors. —E.C.

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Television

Brown, Les. *Les Brown's Encyclopedia of Television.* New York: N.Y. Zoetrope, 80 East 11th St., NY 10003, 1982. $29.95 cloth, $16.95 paper. An expanded edition of the 1977 *New York Times Encyclopedia of Television,* this volume presents compact information on personalities (its neutrality may be gauged from examining its entry on Howard Cosell), series programs, networks, legal decisions, trade terminology ("CPM" means cost per thousand viewers), organizations, etc. A basic reference work. —E.C.

Cantor, Muriel G. and Suzanne Pingree. *The Soap Opera.* Beverly Hills: Sage, 1983. $29.95 cloth, $9.95 paper. This is an attempt to restore soap operas to a place of respectability for social-science communications research. The authors seem to be unaware of feminist debate in the area, but they study the content and form of the soaps carefully and conclude they "have more potential than prime time to present positive images of contemporary women." One fascinating chapter details changes in *The Guiding Light* from 1948 to 1982. —E.C.

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Gitlin, Todd. *Inside Prime Time.* New York: Pantheon, 1983. $16.95. This is very likely the most concentratedly intelligent book yet written about television. Gitlin immersed himself in the industry and yet somehow managed to preserve an independent, thoughtful viewpoint. The result is a delightfully concrete account of recent production from the inside which does not become captive of the usual trade assumptions. The fates of *Lou Grant, M*A*S*H, Hill Street Blues,* and many other shows are treated in detail, but with a broad social perspective that catches something of our national pathos (Gitlin is a poet as well as a sociologist): "Television can no more speak without ideology than we can speak without prose. We swim in its world even if we don't believe in it." —E.C.

MacDonald, J. Fred. *Blacks and White TV: Afro-Americans in Television since 1948.* Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1983. $23.95 cloth, $11.95 paper. How the hopes of the sixties—that TV might prove a substantial aid in the equitable integration of American society—were dashed by the increasingly trivial, stereotyped, and conservative handling of black roles in the seventies and eighties. —E.C.

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Tulloch, John and Alvarado, Manuel. *Doctor Who: The Unfolding Text.* London: Macmillan, 1983. £20.00 cloth, £6.95 paperback. *Doctor Who* has now been running on BBC-TV for 20 years and has generated its own Appreciation Society. This volume attacks the time-travel program with dedicated semiotic rigor, with detailed attention both to the evolution of some individual shows and the slow changes in the program as a whole. As we might expect by now, the British again surpass their American TV competitors (*Star Trek*?) in imagination, intelligence, and verve, and American fans can learn from this book a great deal—perhaps indeed a bit too much—about how they do it. —E.C.

Tuomola, Ollie. *International TV and Video Guide: 1984.* New York: New York Zeotrope, 80 E. 11th, Suite 516, NY 10003, 1983. $11.95 paper. Modelled after the highly successful *International Film Guide,* this first issue of the video counterpart contains a few general articles (one, tantalizingly vague, on high-definition video) plus interviews and then launches into an exhaustive worldwide survey. Did you know that Radio Television Brunei is "probably one of the best equipped stations of the world"? Or that in Singapore, "English films have Malay and Chinese subtitles and in some cases Hindi; Chinese feature films and plays have English and Malay subtitles; Malay and Indonesian films have English, Chinese and Hindi subtitles; Indian films have English and Malay subtitles"? (They also have strict censorship, with Olivia Newton-John and skateboarding both banned.) The US section is particularly interesting, with caustic commentary by James Monaco and a checklist of made-for-TV movies (May 1982–May 1983). With a listing of TV and video schools. —E.C.

Zicree, Marc Scott. *The Twilight Zone Companion.* New York: Bantam Books, 1982. $9.95 paper. *The Twilight Zone Companion* is a dream come true for those of us who still love the almost 25-year-old television series. It not only provides a description of every script presented during the show's five seasons, but it also includes all of Serling's commentaries; Serling's inimitable tone is not lost in written form. In addition, Zicree has included as much information about the writing and directing of the scripts, the set and costume designs, and the particular actors involved as he could uncover. Although some of the plot renditions are not as comprehensive as they could be, the overall catalogue of information provided will satisfy the demands of even the most knowledgable fan.

—SUSAN SITKIN

Textbooks

Grant, Barry Keith, ed. *Film Study in the Undergraduate Curriculum.* New York: Modern Language Association, 1983. This collection of descriptions of programs is not a comprehensive guide to current offerings, but rather a more in-depth treatment of the different types of programs now in existence—including some hints of the problems film departments encounter. Both the rationale and course listing are normally given for each institution. —E.C.

Selinske, Robert. *Talking About Films.* Media Center, Foothill College, 12345 El Monte Road, Los Altos Hills, CA 94022, 1983. $12.95. This is a discussion guide for use in teaching a varied collection of mainline classics—mainly questions that will sensitize students to the dramatic meanings and symbolic strategies of the films. —E.C.

Stromgren, Richard L. and Martin F. Norden. *Movies: A Language in Light.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1984. $16.95 paperback. This text reviews film history, discusses the medium's aesthetic resources, and surveys critical methods; contains sections on both documentary and avant-garde film. Aimed at the introductory general text market. —E.C.

Withers, Robert S. *Introduction to Film: A Guide to the Art, Technology, Language, and Appreciation of Film.* New York: Barnes & Noble, 1983. $6.95 paperback. The student using the Outline Series books finds the material already outlined, which may or may not be an assistance to serious thought. At any rate, Withers (who is a film-maker himself) has an orderly way of presenting both technical and analytical information, and the brevity of the text will recommend it for introductory courses. Oddly enough, since Withers makes non-theatrical films, the focus is almost entirely on features, with minor coverage of documentary.

—E.C.

Theory

CINEMA 1: L'IMAGE-MOUVEMENT

By Gilles Deleuze. Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1983. Paperback, 75 francs.

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example, Bergson, who serves as one of Deleuze's major points of reference), *L'Image-mouvement* stands as one of the few cases in which a philosopher has devoted a full study to film, thoroughly reading and internalizing the necessary texts, approaching the subject from anything more than the position of a dilettantish outsider or, on the contrary, an utter skeptic dismissing the subject of film (as did Bergson) as a symbol of the degradation of perception in the modern world. Arguing that "the great *auteurs* of cinema . . . think with movement-images and time-images" and so are "comparable not only to painters, architects, musicians, but also to philosophers," Deleuze writes the kind of serious study of film that (hopefully) will shake up philosophers and make them admit the need to study an art that is so much a part of our modernity.

In an obvious sense, Deleuze appears to come out of the auteurist criticism that so dominated French writing on film in the late forties, fifties, and sixties (and still continues unabated in magazines like *Positif*). In such criticism, each *auteur*'s production embodies a world-view, a proto-philosophy, embedded not only in the conscious communication of themes but also in the plays of *mise-en-scène* and cinematic technique. Such auteurism has intense links to a Romantic ideology of art-as-expression but it at least had the polemical value of suggesting that such expression occurred not only in content but in cinematic form; auteurism thus encourages a study of cinematic form as signifying form. It is such a study that directly inspires Deleuze's investigation. But where philosophers could always dismiss auteurists as philosophic amateurs who really didn't know what it meant to compare, say, Jerry Lewis to Hegel, *L'Image-mouvement* will be less easy to ignore. With an (ironic?) matter-of-factness, Deleuze ranges from Michael Snow to Howard Hawks to Jacques Tourneur to Robert Altman to Mario Bava, arguing in each the presence of a particular and personal investment in a philosophy of movement. At the same time, he studies the philosophies of perception in such thinkers as Bergson, Kant, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, and Charles Peirce. While much of the book won't explain anything new to film scholars (for example, a well-stated but also well-accepted analysis of the difference between Griffithian and Eisensteinian montage), the very extent to which Deleuze relentlessly demands his readers' knowledge of film issues (for example, his persistence in referring to film-makers like Snow or George Landow only by their last name) may well help to break the boundaries that have all too often separated film off from other areas of contemporary cultural investigation.

To be sure, there is much in the specifics of Deleuze's argument that is of value. Deleuze belongs to that tradition interested in constructing global theories of film meaning, and it will be productive to read *L'Image-mouvement* within the lineage of thinkers ranging from Bazin to Arnheim to Mitry. Deleuze begins, in contrast to phenomenologists, by separating film perception off from everyday perception, and then sets out to define the characteristics of that separation. As his title implies, he bases film's difference in its conversion of sight through movement, and much of the book undertakes to catalogue the forms of cinematic movement: movement within frame; movement between in-frame and off-frame; movement between shots; movement of narrative; psychological movement between screen and spectator.

Cutting across these specific forms, Deleuze argues, four major types of image-movement exist: the image-perception which focuses attention on the act of seeing (summed up by film-makers like Vertov, the French impressionists of the twenties, the structural tradition of American and British experimental film); the image-affection which focuses attention on intense moments of emotional engagement (as in the facial close-ups in Bergman or Dreyer, or the grip of radiant color as in Minnelli); the image-pulsion which focuses attention on images of primal energy, raw drives (summed up by Stroheim, Buñuel, Fuller, and Losey); and the image-action which focuses attention on the relation between characters and situation (as in the epic narratives of Kurosawa or Ford). Deleuze seems to leave deliberately blurred both the boundaries between each mode and the defining of each mode in itself; he prefers to see each as a tendency, never found in a pure state. For example, the image-pulsion where characters and objects seem under the control of irrational forces frequently glides into the image-action wherein

the unchannelled energy of the pulsion finds a socially acceptable form; for example, Fuller's primitives often find a belief to weld their raw energy to.

Deleuze opens with the declaration that *L'Image* is not a history, but a first attempt at a taxonomy of film—one whose study of movement he promises to follow with a second volume on time. And yet, a subtle historical argument does underlie Deleuze's classification. Although he argues no necessary historical relationship between the four central classes of image-movement, his book ends with a discussion on the "crisis of the image-action" in which he treats the postwar break-up of realist narrative in American, Italian, and German cinema. Where the image-action depends upon a precise establishment of protagonists in their situating environment and so offers the spectacle of a certain realism, postwar developments create an anti-narrative cinema in which situation becomes inessential. Deleuze isolates five qualities of this new historical possibility: the dispersion of real space into a non- or fragmented space (as in Altman where multiple actions break up the unity of dramatic space); the weakening of dramatic logic (as in Cassavetes); an increased emphasis on wandering and a motion that arrives nowhere (as in *Easy Rider* or Lumet's images of continuous comings-and-goings in a film like *Dog Day Afternoon*); the recognition that in a world of non-action and of the lack of individual initiative the only center of power lies not in individuals but in the proliferation of media signals, clichés from on high (as in *King of Comedy* or *Nashville* or *Network*); and a paranoid fascination with notions of conspiracy (as in Lumet's *Network, Anderson Tapes,* and *Prince of the City*). Thus, in a few pages, Deleuze presents a panorama of the new form of energy in the new American feature film. But perhaps even more suggestively, he goes on to examine Italian neorealism in the same light and finds in that cinema not a naturalism or a realism but a kind of modernist anti-realism in which space has no real existence (as he notes, the frequent image of rain in Italian films works to render space insubstantial); in which individual agency or projects have no force; in which the guiding light in peoples's lives is not their own will but a will imposed by media and mass culture (hence, in Fellini, the most clearly defined spaces are those of nightclubs or circuses or cinemas or other spots of entertainment).

L'Image-Mouvement is filled with myriad thoughts about film ranging from broad philosophic reflection to close analysis (for example, a discussion of shadow and light in specific films of Von Sternberg) to random meditation (for example, an intriguing commentary on Method Acting and the Actor's Studio). The book is a virtuoso performance, especially for people outside the discipline of film studies, but that very virtuosity may well be the source of the major reservation I have about *L'Image-Mouvement:* it tries to do too much in too short a space. Frequently, one wishes that Deleuze would slow down and explain why he's bringing in a certain argument; although theoretical, the book lacks an explicit metatheoretical analysis of its goals, its methods, its desires. For example, Deleuze announces that he has little interest in psychoanalytic or linguistic (i.e., Metzian) approaches to film but, except for a few throwaway criticisms of the ways these approaches seem to him to reduce and distort their objects of analysis, he provides no extended justification of his disavowal; to be sure, some of the justification derives from the argument of *Anti-Oedipus* but since psychoanalysis and semiotics may be the dominant methods in film study today, it would have been interesting for Deleuze to turn his mere assertions about these methods into articulated arguments.

And yet, any criticisms must be relative in light of the extreme historical importance of the book (although one can hope that Deleuze might make his theoretical investment more explicit in volume 2). The appearance of *L'Image-mouvement* is an exciting event for film study and one that well deserves serious attention and commentary.

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CINEMA AND LANGUAGE

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The first volume in the AFI's invaluable monograph series devoted to media theory conferences—produced, like the others, thanks to the admirable tenacity of Ann Martin prior to her departure from the AFI's Education Services—is, as co-editors Stephen Heath and Patricia Mellencamp point out in their brief preface, only "*one* record" of the conference they co-directed. (Oddly enough, the same preface neglects to mention the one film shown—Noël Burch's *Correction Please, or How We Got into Pictures*—which conceivably had the most to do with the conference's stated topic.) But if this record remains necessarily partial, it is nevertheless quite useful for what it *does* offer. While three of the papers—by Stephen Heath ("Language, Sight and Sound"), Dudley Andrew ("The Primacy of the Figure in Cinematic Signification") and Paul Willemen ("Cinematic Discourse: The Problem of Inner Speech")—have already been published elsewhere, there are ten more appearing here for the first time, all of them of interest: studies of spectatorial placement by Mary Ann Doane and Malcolm Le Grice, a theoretical feminist overview by Teresa de Lauretis ("From a Dream of Woman"), Mellencamp on "Jokes and Their Relation to the Marx Brothers," Philip Rosen on "Subject Formation and Social Formation," three papers on Japanese cinema (by Burch, David Bordwell and Don Kirihara) and two on *Un Chien andalou* (by Laura Oswald and Linda Williams, who engage in a debate on their differences). Of particular interest is Kirihara's "Kabuki, Cinema and Mizoguchi Kenji," a fascinating study of the stylistic bracketing of kabuki in *The Story of the Last Chrysanthemums* (1939), perhaps the most neglected of Mizoguchi's masterpieces.

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THE SUBJECT OF SEMIOTICS

By Kaja Silverman. New York: Oxford, 1983. $35.00.

"Semiotics": the term has wreaked havoc at film conferences, university campuses, and publishing houses across the country. Its very elusiveness—is it a mode of inquiry, a discipline, a theory?—has made it the object of much energetic debate. Some people are unabashedly messianic about its methodological possibilities. Still others know that they must come to terms with it, but find themselves dragged kicking and screaming through the tortuous (not to say torturous) *défiles* of the signifier. And there are those who have made a virtue of an adversary position, producing counter-discourses like rabbits out of a hat. If only someone would write a book that approached the material with clarity, grace, and precision of thought, a book whose seriousness and subtlety of analysis would provide an accessible explication of the terminology, a lucid illustration of its procedures, and a critical assessment of its usefulness! In *The Subject of Semiotics* Kaja Silverman has given us just that.

Silverman offers her work as a supplementary or explanatory text to the current post-structuralist debates within the discourses of anthropology, linguistics, literature and film. The prefatory quote (from Benveniste) situates this work within language from the start: "It is in and through language that man constitutes himself as a *subject* . . . 'Ego' is he who *says* 'ego'." Thus Silverman initiates her task by attesting to the inextricability of the twin enterprises (psychoanalysis—the science of the unconscious, and semiotics—the science of meaning) which govern the book. But far from being a simple primer, the book is rich with imaginative insights and illustrative examples from film and literature, for it is Silverman's purpose to constantly articulate the reciprocal relations between texts and theory. Perhaps most important, though, in distinguishing this book from others which have set themselves a similar project, is Silverman's emphatic reference to the question of sexual difference as a constitutive organizing principle in all of signification and sociality. Thus while she lucidly explicates Freud and Lacan (among others), she does so from a perspective which acknowledges both the centrality of paternal values in the current cultural order

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and the necessity of rethinking female subjectivity in order to "denaturalize the condition of woman" with an eye toward social transformation.

In keeping with this emphasis, the book proceeds from a concise history of the theory of the sign (from Saussure to Benveniste), through an explication of the primary and secondary processes which govern the Freudian unconscious, to an elaboration of the signifying axes of paradigm/syntagm, metaphor/metonymy, and condensation/displacement which negotiate these processes, and finally through an extremely illuminating discussion of the psychoanalytic theories of the subject and the suture. Silverman concludes with an extended analysis of the classic literary text by way of Roland Barthes's five codes (first elaborated in *S/Z*). Such comprehensiveness in an introductory general text is undeniably difficult and Silverman sometimes oversimplifies for the sake of description or argument. In places this offers misleading reductions of certain key concepts, a pitfall almost endemic to this type of project. Yet, throughout all this, Silverman never loses sight of the ideological implications of the theories she describes, and is thus constantly concerned to insert her discussions into the context of global symbolic (and therefore social) structures.

Not surprisingly, the issues most relevant to feminism are emphasized in the two "psychoanalytic" chapters, those entitled "The Subject" and "Suture," respectively. And it is here that Silverman's particular talents for clarifying (and then utilizing or applying) the notoriously difficult theories of Lacanian psychoanalysis and cinematic enunciation are most evident. The two chapters taken together provide a very convincing argument supporting the application of psychoanalysis to film theory while at the same time emphasizing the determining importance of sexual difference in both areas. Those "discursive instances which inaugurate subjectivity and mediate even the earliest identifications"—the primordial moment of signification, the first experience of loss, the mirror-recognition of an alienated self, the formation of the unconscious, the entry into the symbolic order of culture, and the advent of desire—all in some way both locate and rely upon the female, be it as the maternal first object or as the "lacking" Oedipal figure.

Because of this, sexual difference can be seen to structure the unconscious, and by extension all social and signifying activity. Using the story told by Aristophanes in Plato's *Symposium* about the birth of desire (as does Lacan), Silverman outlines and elaborates on key Lacanian assumptions: human subjectivity is marked by loss. Deriving from an original experience of wholeness which has been sundered, the human subject is dominated by a desire to recover its missing complement. The division suffered by the subject is sexual in nature; the loss of sexual androgyny in exchange for a masculine or feminine definition is seen as fully determining the subject's social identity. Thus, Silverman points out, according to Lacan's hypotheses "the sexually differentiating scenarios of the culture into which the subject is later assimilated show it the 'way' to 'sexual fulfillment,' the path to personal salvation." (154)

It is this social perspective on psychoanalytic processes that anchors the book's treatment of "suture" (the term used to describe the variety of procedures by which cinematic texts create and position the viewing subject). For example, in discussing the reverse-shot structure and its relation to suture, Silverman continually attempts to return the *cinematic* theory of the suture in film analysis to the *psychoanalytic* theory of the construction of the subject, in order to avoid a simple formal or technical description of editing processes and at the same time to emphasize the larger ideological implications of film theory. Starting with a distinction between the "speaking subject of the cinematic text [which] is always situated at the site of production" and the "spoken subject . . . most exemplarily found instead at the site of consumption," (198) Silverman traces the various nuances in the differing theories of the cinematic suture: "Some address the connections between the viewer and the fictional character with whom that viewer identifies, while others explore the connections between the level of the enunciation and that of the fiction." (199) She then explores the "binding" operation of cinematic narrative, which continually responds to the absence evoked by the edges of the film frame by offering coherence and narrative meaning,

reasserting plenitude in the face of what has been perceived by the spectator as a disturbing lack. Yet that very coherence is only made possible through the constant assertion of negativity, making the cinematic fiction a perpetual process of loss and retrieval, a process which in a sense "captures" the viewing subject and thereby re-enacts its entry into the symbolic order.

But perhaps more important than the explanatory value of this type of exposition is Silverman's extrapolation to the sexual divisions involved in cinematic viewing, leading to a theorization of the male gaze and its possible subversions. Starting from a summary of Laura Mulvey's landmark article "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," Silverman concludes that the similarities between Mulvey and the theoreticians of the suture (involving "a cinematic adventure in which plenitude is fractured by difference and lack, only to be sealed over once again") generate the feminist assertion that "the lack [in cinema] which must be both dramatized and contained finds its locus in the female body." (224) In one of the most intriguing filmic analyses in the book, Silverman deals with Max Ophuls's *Lola Montes* as a text which crystallizes the status of the female image in classic cinema. The narrative itself combines Mulvey's two options for the female character by a continual movement between interrogation/control of Lola and her fetishization as spectacle. However, more crucially, interspersed within this narrative are flashbacks in which images of Lola remain much more fragmented, threatening narrative coherence and fictional continuity; an *active* exhibitionism enables Lola to assume power and thus to confer a very different status on the male gaze.

Silverman concludes her chapter on suture with a useful discussion of Jacqueline Rose's arguments in her article "Paranoia and the Film System." Rose suggests that one possibility for transforming the position of the viewing subject lies in "maximizing the disruptive potential of the imaginary excess which always haunts the system of the suture . . .[perhaps] most fully precisely at the shot/reverse shot juncture." (Silverman's words, 235) For Rose, that excess signifies not necessarily a repressed (and thus predetermined and essential) "femininity," but more importantly the possibility for destabilizing the symbolic order, for "throwing into jeopardy its Oedipal identifications." It is thus at the point where theories of the cinematic suture join those of female subjectivity that the potential for any alternative formulation will be found.

Finally, it must be said that while the filmic and literary examples in *The Subject of Semiotics* are sometimes weak (Silverman occasionally opts for a simple plot summary to illustrate a point in a fairly literal way), this does not detract from the book's overall usefulness. After all, the book is strongest when it is read as intended, as an explanatory text rather than as textual analysis. In fact, what it does achieve—and this it does with stunning lucidity and precision—is to provide significant and illuminating discussions of some of the major theoretical debates of our time.

—SANDY FLITTERMAN

Miscellaneous

FILM MAKERS ON FILM MAKING

Edited by Joseph McBride. Volumes I and II. Los Angeles, J. P. Tarcher, 1983. $16.95 cloth, $7.95 paper.

McBride (of *Hawks on Hawks*) has collected transcripts from more than a decade of American Film Institute seminars with producers, directors, writers, performers, and other filmmakers; some critical people such as studio executives, agents and casting directors are also represented, in line with McBride's conviction that a proper understanding of the film-making process must include the roles of everybody involved—not just the directors and stars. McBride has provided introductory notes for each figure, with a filmography, and has edited the several-hour conversations down to briskly readable length. (You usually wish there were more.) He has also discreetly put in bracketed inserts which, for example, explain whom Wilder and Brackett were talking about as the real-life sources for the plot of *The Apartment*. The material is fascinating straight-from-the-shoulder talk, from professionals to embryo professionals, and it will richly repay the attention of every aspiring film-maker. McBride has also added a section at the back of each volume for short snippets from people whose whole interviews

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THE MOVIE BUSINESS BOOK

Edited by Jason E. Squire. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1983. $13.95 paper / $24.95 cloth.

MOVIES AND MONEY
Financing the American Film Industry

By Janet Wasko. Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1982. $13.95 paper / $24.95 cloth.

These two volumes represent contrasting approaches to the study of the American film industry. Squire accepts the status quo, and seeks to lay out for the reader the essential elements of "creation," financing, production, marketing, distribution, and exhibition of movies" (p. 9). *The Movie Business Book* takes direct aim at a college textbook market, looking for potential adoptions by faculty teaching in law, business, and film schools. In sharp contrast, Janet Wasko examines "the historical and current role of banking institutions and the motion picture industry, not only because of the banks' intimate historical relationship with the American film industry, but also because of their key positions of power within the American economic and political structure" (p. xxxi). *Movies and Money* utilizes a Marxist methodology to analyze and criticize the long-term financial involvement of banks in the US motion picture industry.

The Movie Business Book is an anthology of 41 articles. Contributions are short (about 4000 words), and are divided into eleven clusters. Squire devotes his first section to the book's stars: directors Sydney Pollack, Mel Brooks, and Joan Micklin Silver. Each tells how he or she started in the business, and gradually achieved a measure of fame during the seventies. (The book stops in 1981.) The next nine sections take up movie production, from the acquisition of a property, through financing and shooting to distribution, exhibition, and marketing. The anthology's final section contains only one article: a "futurist look" at the effects of the new technologies (cable TV, direct broadcast satellites, pay-TV and the like) on the current Hollywood theatrical motion picture industry.

Squire properly notes that *The Movie Business Book* directly descends from the text *The Movie Business: American Film Practice,* published in 1972, and edited by the late A. William Bluem and Squire. The new, longer edition retained the basic structure of the original, with the addition of the initial section on directors-as-stars and the deletion of detailed appendices which provided examples of standard union contracts. Those changes seem intended to make the book more saleable as a textbook. The new edition does contain some fresh material, including a compilation of articles on distribution and exhibition by long-time *Variety* reporter A. D. Murphy.

The essays in *The Movie Business Book* fall into two distinct categories. Those by the directors and executives read like autobiographies, be they personal or corporate. We learn how that particular (successful) industry participant "made it." Their style is general, revealing few specific experiences or project details. The book's other contributions embrace specific, up-to-date information. Typically a lawyer or agent will describe the legal and business constraints involved in "putting together a deal" in present-day Hollywood. This material would seem to be of value for aspiring entertainment lawyers; Jason Squire properly notes that his anthology should be of value in business and law schools, whose students are familiar with the types of data found in *The Movie Business Book.*

Squire openly embraces current Hollywood business practice. He is quite explicit in defining the proper role for the American motion picture industry: "Like all businesses, the theatrical motion picture business exists to make money. *That's the only way* more movies can be produced and an on-going network of production, distribution, and exhibition can be fed." (pp. 2-3) (emphasis is mine). The problem then is to develop ways to simplify and organize the process of profit production. He correctly notes that modern Hollywood is a "cyclical industry, [one] difficult to chart, rooted in creativity and intuition, capable of dismal losses and euphoric profits, [and] engaged in an on-going seduction of the paying

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audience." He then argues that "the responsible film-maker learns early to mix the creative and business sense out of self defense." (pp. 2-3)

Wasko takes up the question of the role profit maximization has played in the US film industry in a fundamentally different way. Based on the author's 1977 Ph.D. dissertation completed at the University of Illinois under Thomas Guback (who provides an introduction for the book), *Movies and Money,* in chronological order, details the historical relationship between banking institutions and the US motion picture industry up to 1980. Not surprisingly the author finds that the largest and most powerful banks long ago acquired significant power within the American economic and political system by providing capital, and long have played "key roles in vital economic and political decision-making." (p. xxi) The core of her argument can be found in one important paragraph in her introduction:

> Indeed, the interaction between banks and film corporations must be situated within the overall structure of industry, finance, and state relations, with banking alliances connecting the film industry in at least one direct way to the network of personal and structural relationships which contribute to the overall complex, interlocking nature of monopoly capitalism. This link becomes particularly important as film cannot be viewed as just another unit of production or industry, as for example, the manufacture of automobiles, shoes or widgets; movies also contribute to the reproduction and perpetuation of dominant ideology—as ideological as well as *economic* components of the capitalist system. And although the relationships and determining factors between these roles are complex and controversal, a more thorough examination of this interaction between finance capital and film provides the possibility for further exploration of this dynamic process. (p. xxi) (Wasko's emphasis).

In the subsequent 250 pages Wasko examines the historical relationship between all sectors of the film industry (production, distribution and exhibition) and banks through a series of case studies. Although she does critique the concept of finance capitalism as laid out by Marx, Hilferding and Lenin, she sees finance capitalism as the motivating and unifying force in the history and current practice of the American motion picture industry. For example, in her longest chapter she describes how, between 1927 and 1939, bankers manipulated the American film industry. Following the lead of F. D. Klingender and Stuart Legg, Wasko concludes that during the thirties the US film "industry was controlled by banks through direct and indirect means." (p. xxii)

But others have not found such control. Indeed some of the very social and economic thinkers Wasko cites have argued that dominance by US bankers ended in 1930, replaced by a corporate hegemony. In particular, Paul Sweezy has posited that although finance capitalism did apply to the epoch of US economic expansionism from 1880 to 1930, it did not afterward. Sweezy demonstrates that during a period of rapid growth bankers did take an active hand in forming corporations. But during the Great Depression these giant corporations financed most operations internally. When necessary, corporate executives were able to play one financial institution off another to acquire favorable terms. Sweezy does not think bankers' influence disappeared after 1930, only that they took on a secondary position in the structure of advanced capitalism. In *Bank Control of Large Corporations in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), David Kotz verified that during the thirties the US federal government instituted several far-reaching programs which, in fact, reduced the real power of banks.

Important implications follow from Sweezy and Kotz's work. They argue that for the thirties we should move our analysis away from banks to that of giant corporations, principally focusing on intercorporate conflict. A new type of competition emerged. Giant corporations often stood together rather than attempt to eliminate each other. They preferred to struggle for a share of an agreed upon profit pie. For Hollywood in the thirties, my own work suggests the analysis of Sweezy and Kotz rings true. Wasko accepts the conclusion which asserts banks controlled Hollywood through the sale of sound equipment during the thirties. But an examination of the corporate records of Warner Bros., Fox, Western Electric, AT&T, and RCA suggests that the major firms of the US film industry united and collectively opposed all direct or indirect takeover attempts. The five major film corporations

were large economic units in their own right, all ranking in the top five hundred largest US nonfinancial corporations in terms of assets. Through monopolization of film production, distribution, and exhibition, these five corporations jointly held dominion over all markets for sound motion pictures. So by standing together they were able to negotiate *lower* (not higher) fees to AT&T for sound equipment and service during the mid-thirties. On this matter the five film industry giants formally allied to protect their own interests.

I have other theoretical reservations about Wasko's book. For example, she fails to deal with the effects of finance capitalism on what she calls "film content." *Movies and Money* leaves this important issue dangling: "Thus, while support of the film industry has been motivated primarily by economic concerns, there also have been ideological bonuses further enhancing the value of the film commodity for its financial backers." (pp. 219–220) Film theorists will wish Wasko had spelled out the nature of those "bonuses."

If one is frustrated by Wasko's theoretical positions, one cannot but admire her diligence in seeking out primary materials to support her case. Whereas Squire's book contains no footnotes or bibliography, *Movies and Money* has 23 pages of footnotes (554 notes), and eleven pages of bibliographic materials. Wasko utilized documents from the Disney Studios, the Bank of America, and the Chase Manhattan Bank.

In sum, *The Movie Business Book* and *Movies and Money* seek to help readers understand past and present workings of the American film industry from opposing perspectives. Both, in different ways, will frustrate film scholars. Hopefully, though, the important questions raised in Squire and Wasko's books will motivate others to initiate further research in this neglected area of film studies.

—DOUGLAS GOMERY

PORTRAIT OF AN INVISIBLE MAN
The Working Life of Stewart McAllister

By Dai Vaughan. London: British Film Institute, 1983. American distributor: University of Illinois Press, Urbana.

In the last few years we have begun to see books by one film director about another—notably Truffaut on Hitchcock and Lindsay Anderson on John Ford. Even so, it is surprising to see a book by a film editor about another film editor, because the work of the editor has never been given the status which would justify a book on the subject. Even in Ralph Rosenblum's book one sensed the conscious need to establish and confirm the importance of editing in the film-making process.

It is entirely appropriate that the first book devoted to the work of a particular film editor should be about the man who was Humphrey Jennings's collaborator; and we must be thankful that Stewart McAllister has found as good a biographer as Dai Vaughan, who has spent 25 years as a film editor working almost exclusively on documentaries. This book demonstrates how the two extremes of popular and jargon-ridden texts have served to hide the fact that books about film can heighten our understanding of the medium if written from experience and knowledge of the craft.

Dai Vaughan's book is a mine of information about the British Documentary movement, especially during World War II. It is because of his meticulous research and interviews with contemporaries of McAllister that the author is able to place his contribution in context. Stewart McAllister was a fellow student of Norman McLaren at Glasgow School of Art in the thirties, where they collaborated on a couple of films. Both came to London in 1937 and joined the GPO Film Unit. Their paths hardly crossed professionally and it was to be his work with Humphrey Jennings on half a dozen wartime documentaries that established McAllister's career. As one quote puts it, "Without McAllister there would have been no Humphrey Jennings"—but the author adds, "Without Jennings there would have been no Stewart McAllister." Vaughan's analysis of some of the films that McAllister cut that were not directed by Jennings establishes the true quality of his own contribution. With this understanding we can see clearly that McAllister's joint credit on *Listen to Britain* was amply justified—indeed the compilation films that McAllister cut were "made" by him than anyone else.

Jennings died tragically in 1952. McAllister lived for another ten years and died a lonely man. Soon after the war he spent a consider-

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Jennings died tragically in 1952. McAllister lived for another ten years and died a lonely man. Soon after the war he spent a consider-

able time cutting a film from footage of the concentration camps. When one reads Vaughan's description of this film it is impossible not to be moved by the picture it evokes of the man who was given such an awful task. It must have been some kind of watershed in McAllister's career; his dedication to his work as part of the war effort was thus confronted with the most revolting aspects of Nazi inhumanity.

It is a measure of Dai Vaughan's achievement that in a book which strives to be dispassionate and objective one becomes so close to McAllister that he is not only made visible but alive. Everyone who takes film seriously should read this book; there could be no better testament to the past and present value of the editor in the collaborative art of film-making.

—ROGER CRITTENDEN

Bergman, Ingmar. *A Project for the Theatre.* New York: Ungar, 1983. $15.95. Three plays (*Nora, Julie,* and *Scenes from a Marriage*—upon which the film was later based), which Bergman produced together on the stage. With interview and a critical essay. —E.C.

Dallinger, Nat. *Unforgettable Hollywood.* New York: William Morrow & Co., Quill. 1983. $12.95 paper. Candid photos by one of the leading *paparrazzi* of old-time Hollywood: flashbulb shots galore. —E.C.

Dickens, Homer. *What a Drag: Men as Women and Women as Men in the Movies.* New York: Morrow, 1984. $10.95, paperback. A picture album of drag roles from *Charley's Aunt* to *Victor/Victoria* —E.C.

Dmytryk, Edward. *On Screen Directing.* Boston, London: Focal Press, 1984. $10.95 paperback. Dmytryk is not exactly a nimble writer, but he lays out the basics of the film director's work in clear, systematic fashion, with intriguing anecdotes from his own and others' experience. Dmytryk began as an editor, and his views on the construction of films are precise and logical. Informative for any student or beginning director. —E.C.

Finch, Christopher. *The Making of The Dark Crystal.* New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1983. $10.95. From original fantasy sketches to finished radio-controlled puppets, this enthusiastic account traces the preparations for the Jim Henson film in loving detail: drawings, models, and a menagerie of bizarre creatures devised by Brian Froud—some gruesome, some adorable. —E.C.

Graham, Don. *Cowboys and Cadillacs: How Hollywood Looks at Texas.* Austin: Texas Monthly Press, 1983. $10.95 paperback. Cheerful (and cosmopolitan) ruminations on the myths and realities of Texas, as reflected or distorted on the silver screen. —E.C.

Harmon, Renee. *The Actor's Survival Guide for Today's Film Industry.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1984. $6.95 paperback. After warning you that a straight job is a necessity considering that all but 21% of Screen Actors Guild members make less than $5,000 a year, Harmon goes on to give detailed hard-nosed advice about getting into the business. She has a warm spot for non-union productions ("The spirit on most of these shoots is fantastic") and gives tips on working on commercials, sponsored films, etc.; how to type-cast yourself, pick fashion categories, find an agent, and things like showing "right-away power" in the first five seconds of an interview. On the whole, it sounds like a dog's life, and Harmon has some psychological advice about how to handle that, too. —E.C.

Harwell, Richard, ed. *Gone With The Wind As Book and Film.* Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1983. The author, a librarian, knew Margaret Mitchell before her fame, and has here collected and annotated a large collection of writings about her novel and the Selznick film. With photos of Mitchell, the production, etc. —E.C.

Hotchner, A. E. *Choice People: The Greats, Near-Greats, and Ingrates I Have Known.* New York: Morrow, 1984. $16.95. Charming reminiscences, mostly of the author's attempts to track down and get the inside hot stuff about a great variety of film and literary luminaries. Sophia Loren persisted in not inviting him to dinner—or even lunch—but others were friendly. Considering his waspishness (of the emaciated Barbara Hutton: "Only her jewelry looked healthy"; of Edna Ferber, "The only physically attractive thing about her were [sic] her teeth"), caution was probably in order. But Hotchner is intelligent, witty, and perceptive, and his company was evidently pleasant enough, at least in moderate doses, for a lot of interesting people to unload surprising confidences. The result is still gossip, but it's more than the usual superficial Hollywood celebrity-mongering. —E.C.

Kelley, Samuel L. *The Evolution of Character Portrayals in the Films of Sidney Poitier, 1950–1978.* New York: Garland Publishing, 1983. $39.00. A printed version of a typewritten dissertation, reviewing Poitier's career and correlating the roles he played (from cautious—and sexless—assimilationism to the attempt at something like militancy in *Lost Man*) with the evolution of race relations in America. Kelley is particularly good at analyzing the idiocies of such Poitier vehicles as *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?* from a black vantage point. —E.C.

Lawton, Richard. *Grand Illusions.* New York: Harmony, 1983. $10.95 paper. A sumptuously printed picture book: stills from the great heavy-lighting era of Hollywood, mostly the great icono-

able time cutting a film from footage of the concentration camps. When one reads Vaughan's description of this film it is impossible not to be moved by the picture it evokes of the man who was given such an awful task. It must have been some kind of watershed in McAllister's career; his dedication to his work as part of the war effort was thus confronted with the most revolting aspects of Nazi inhumanity.

It is a measure of Dai Vaughan's achievement that in a book which strives to be dispassionate and objective one becomes so close to McAllister that he is not only made visible but alive. Everyone who takes film seriously should read this book; there could be no better testament to the past and present value of the editor in the collaborative art of film-making.

—ROGER CRITTENDEN

Bergman, Ingmar. *A Project for the Theatre.* New York: Ungar, 1983. $15.95. Three plays (*Nora, Julie,* and *Scenes from a Marriage*—upon which the film was later based), which Bergman produced together on the stage. With interview and a critical essay. —E.C.

Dallinger, Nat. *Unforgettable Hollywood.* New York: William Morrow & Co., Quill. 1983. $12.95 paper. Candid photos by one of the leading *paparrazzi* of old-time Hollywood: flashbulb shots galore. —E.C.

Dickens, Homer. *What a Drag: Men as Women and Women as Men in the Movies.* New York: Morrow, 1984. $10.95, paperback. A picture album of drag roles from *Charley's Aunt* to *Victor/Victoria* —E.C.

Dmytryk, Edward. *On Screen Directing.* Boston, London: Focal Press, 1984. $10.95 paperback. Dmytryk is not exactly a nimble writer, but he lays out the basics of the film director's work in clear, systematic fashion, with intriguing anecdotes from his own and others' experience. Dmytryk began as an editor, and his views on the construction of films are precise and logical. Informative for any student or beginning director. —E.C.

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Lewis, M. K. and Rosemary Lewis. *Your Film Acting Career.* New York: Crown, 1983. $15.95 cloth, $8.95 paper. This is not only full of sensible practical advice, but clues you in to the current vocabulary and minutiae of business practice: what "the Hero" is in commercial-shooting lingo (the product), what it means when "Hold" appears after your name on the daily sign-out sheet, how to hit a T-mark on grass, why it's crucial to match yourself. Essential reading for any aspirant to movie or TV acting. —E.C.

Medved, Harry & Michael. *The Hollywood Hall of Shame: The Most Expensive Flops in Movie History.* New York: Perigee Books, 1984. $8.95 paperback. An amusing ribbing, but not without interesting historical details, of the making of extremely expensive and even more extremely unsuccessful movies like *Cleopatra, Heaven's Gate,* and the Moonie-financed *Inchon!* The movie business has more than its share of cynical insiders eager to talk to the press, and the Medveds have gleefully accumulated many witty cracks, to which they have added their own put-downs. —E.C.

Morley, Sheridan. *Tales From the Hollywood Raj: The British, the Movies, and Tinseltown.* New York: Viking, 1984. $17.95. The British colony in Hollywood were a talented and prickly lot, alternating looking down elegant noses at the "monstrous moneymakers" (Tony Richardson on the Selznicks and Zanucks—one wonders what he thinks of their successors?) or relaxedly settling down in the welcome California sunshine. Morley recounts many marvelous anecdotes, most of them told with English flair. My favorite is how Buster Keaton, virtually a ghost on the set of *Limelight,* showed the then unknown Claire Bloom a tourist postcard of a lavish mansion, said it used to be his—and then retreated again into silence. Morley also gives some sense of the exchanges and interpenetrations of talent between the British and American industries. —E.C.

Pym, John. *The Wandering Company: Twenty-One Years of Merchant Ivory Films.* New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1983. $8.95. After brief biographical sketches of the Indian Muslim Ismail Merchant, the Oregonian James Ivory, and the German Jewish Ruth Prawer Jhabvala (her husband is an Indian architect), Pym tells how each of the 18 feature, short and documentary films made by the team got created, and mixes in some relaxed critical commentary as well. The book, which originated with the British Film Institute, is very attractively laid out, and Ivory contributes side-notes to Pym's text. —E.C.

Treole, Victoria, ed. *Australian Independent Film.* Creative Development Branch of the Australian Film Commission, Sydney, Australia, 1982. Along with its feature industry, Australia also has independent film-makers, many of whom make short-story-structured films of somewhat less than feature length. Credits and synopses. —E.C.

FRENCH FILM BOOKS 1983-84 by Paul R. Michaud

The continued rise in the value of the American dollar has proved again to be a boon to the buyer of French film books. Because of the higher-priced dollar, more francs are put by French publishers into original works rather than into translations of US film books of dubious value. Meanwhile, at a current value of more than eight francs, the dollar now buys twice what it bought four years ago.

The past publishing season has seen a number of important events: Editions du Cerf, which in the fifties published many of the important texts associated with the Nouvelle Vague, has begun publishing again its film book collection with remarkable texts on Mizoguchi, the contemporary French cinema, and, appropriately, the New Wave twenty-five years after. OCIC, the Catholic Film Office based in Brussels, has issued the first four volumes of a series of monographs devoted to notable Third World film-making countries, among them Upper Volta and Senegal. Among the new series that have been launched during the past year, one must point to Editions de l'Etoile which has put out collections of writings by Eric Rohmer and André Bazin, and to the Cinémathèque Française which has launched an ambitious program to fill the gaps left in the French film heritage by the more commercial publishers: one of its first volumes is the collected writings of Louis Delluc, a pioneer of the French film, but also of French film criticism.

Among the publishers who continued to publish already established collections were: Edilig, Hatier, Gallimard, and Veyrier, where Claude Gauteur has brought out several more excellent titles. Last year was also marked by a certain tendency to decentralize the publishing of French film volumes, with series of consistent quality being issued in Lyon (Institut Lumière), Perpignan (Cahiers de la Cinémathèque), and Plan de la Tour, in the South of France (Editions d'Aujourd'hui). As for subject matter, French film books published in 1983-84 seemed to be more xenophobic than usual, being much less concerned than ever with other national cinemas. The periods of French film history being focused upon were the thirties, the wartime and postwar forties, and the rise of the Nouvelle Vague in the late fifties.

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appearance of the definitive edition of François Truffaut's *Hitchcock,* Jean Renoir's *Lettres d'Amérique,* written from his California exile in 1940–49, and François Chevassu's *La Saison cinématographique 1945/47,* the first study of the two years that in retrospect were among the most important in the cinematographic history of France.

Henri Alekan, *Des Ombres et des lumières,* Editions du Sycomore, 102, boulevard Beaumarchais, 75011 Paris. Memoirs of Jean Cocteau's director of photography on *Beauty and the Beast,* but also of Abel Gance, Joseph Losey and Wim Wenders.

Claude Autant-Lara, *La Rage dans le coeur,* first volume: 1903–29, Editions Henri Veyrier, 12 rue de Nesle, 75006 Paris. Memoirs of the director of *Le Rouge et le Noir* and *La Traversée de Paris.* An excellent complement to Autant-Lara's *Telemaffia* and Freddy Buache's monograph on the all-important but little-known French director.

Victor Bachy, *le Cinéma au Mali, le cinéma en Côte-d'Ivoire, la Haute-Volta et le cinéma,* three volumes published by OCIC, 8 rue de l'Orme, B-1040 Brussels. Finally, some serious works, with filmographies and bibliographies, on the more important of the Black African cinemas, especially Upper Volta which has become known in the film world as the "Black Hollywood" of Africa.

Jose Baldizzone and Pierre Guibert, *Cinéma et Histoire, Histoire du Cinéma,* Cahiers de la Cinémathèque, Palais des Congres, 66000 Perpignan. On the historical film, especially as it concerns the history of film. As usual with this collection, very scholarly although at times austere and abstruse.

Jose Baldizzone, *le Cinéma du samedi soir,* Cahiers de la Cinémathèque. A collection of essays on French society of the thirties, as seen through popular films of the day.

André Bazin, *De la Liberation à la Nouvelle Vague,* joint edition of Cahiers du Cinéma/Editions de l'Etoile, distributed by Editions du Seuil, 27 rue Jacob, 75006 Paris. Known until now for *What is Cinema?* and his wartime writings (as edited by François Truffaut), Bazin was so prolific between 1944 and 1959 that there are still hundreds of his articles that so far have gone uncollected; this volume attempts to right that wrong by presenting the best of what Bazin wrote during those 13 years, all-important in the evolution of the French film.

Regis Bergeron, *le Cinéma chinois, 1949–1983,* l'Harmattan, 7 rue de l'Ecole polytechnique, 75005 Paris. Bergeron is a former professor at the University of Peking who has already published a volume on the Chinese film of 1905–49. Although his work is tainted by a Marxist perspective—but so was Georges Sadoul's—it is nevertheless scholarly and complete.

André Bernard, Charles Floquet, *Album Sacha Guitry,* Veyrier, 12 rue du Nesle, 75006 Paris. Of a very high quality, this heavily illustrated tome looks at the career of the author of *Le Roman d'un tricheur* and *La Poison.*

Maurice Bessy, *Charlie Chaplin,* Pygmalion/Gerard Watelet, 70 avenue de Breteuil, 75007 Paris. Full of unpublished material and unusual insights into the work of one of the pioneers of world cinema.

Danièle Bion, *Bertrand Tavernier. Cinéaste de l'Emotion,* Hatier, 59 boulevard Raspail, 75006 Paris. The first study of Tavernier, author of *L'Horloger de Saint Paul* and, more recently, *Un Dimanche à la Campagne.* Beautifully illustrated with photographs taken on the set of the latter film by Robert Doisneau.

Pierre Cadars, *Gerard Philipe,* Veyrier, 12 rue de Nesle, 75006 Paris. As with the other volumes in this publisher's series on French film actors, this one is nicely-illustrated but also intelligently-written.

Cahiers Elie Faure, c/o Mme Martine Chatelais, Les Roches, Le Perron, 69830 Saint Georges de Reneims. Volume two of this annual publication contains a heretofore unpublished essay on Vigo's *L'Atalante* (1934) and Faure's reply (1931) to a survey on films on war and peace.

François Chevassu, editor, *La Saison cinématographique 1945/47,* La Revue du cinema, 3 rue Recamier, 75007 paris. The first serious study to treat what happened in the all-important two years that followed the liberation of France. French cinema was practically snuffed out during these two years, because of the Blum-Byrnes accord that flooded France with the thousands of films produced by Hollywood during the war. But, it was to be these very films—especially the work of Hawks, Hitchcock, Welles and Renoir—that would provoke the first articles of the Nouvelle Vague *auteurs,* especially Eric Rohmer, Jacques Rivette, François Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard, and, a decade later, would influence their first films.

Raymond Chirat, *le Cinéma français des années 30, le Cinéma français des années de guerre,* Hatier, 59 boulevard Raspail, 75006 Paris. Two excellent volumes on the French cinema of the thirties (the epoch of *Rules of the Game,* but also of *Café de Paris*), and of the Occupation (1940–44); containing thorough indexes and bibliographies, these are good introductory works to films of those years.

Raymond Chirat, *Catalogue des films de long metrage, films sonores de fiction, 1929–1939,* Cinémathèque royale de Belgique, 23 rue Ravenstein, B-1000 Brussels. The definitive listing of French theatrical films distributed during the first ten years of sound films.

Raymond Chirat, Olivier Barrot, *les Excentriques du cinéma français,* Veyrier, 12 rue de Nesle, 75006 Paris. The first serious study of the French character actor (Marcel Dalio, Albert Remy, Gaston Modot, etc.); well-illustrated.

Serge Daney, *la Rampe. Cahiers critiques, 1970–82.* Cahiers du Cinéma/Gallimard, 5 rue Sebastien-Bottin, 75007 Paris. Written wholly for

Cahiers du cinéma during ten very turbulent years in its political evolution, these articles also constitute an original approach to contemporary French cinema.

Louis Delluc, *Ecrits,* Cinémathèque française, avenue du President-Wilson, 75016 Paris. Although little known in America, Louis Delluc was one of the founders of the French school of film criticism, but also one of its first makers of wholly cinematic films. His articles, which had an important impact on the films of post-World War I France, have until now been uncollected—although they have hardly aged and have much pertinence to contemporary cinema.

Jean-Luc Douin, *La Nouvelle Vague 25 ans après.* Editions du Cerf, 29 boulevard Latour-Maubourg, 75007 Paris. A look back at what happened to the French cinema in 1958–59 (*Les Cousins, Les 400 Coups, A Bout de Souffle* and *Paris nous appartient*) and an attempt to establish the veritable importance of such films and their directors: Claude Chabrol, François Truffaut, Jean-Luc Godard, Jacques Rivette and others; in the form of a dossier, this book provides some interesting documents and interviews that give it a certain originality.

Michel Estève, *Robert Bresson, la Passion du Cinématographe,* Albatros, 14 rue de l'Armorique, 75015 Paris. Bresson calls this work "too Catholic," but nevertheless Estève, a leading Bresson scholar, manages to say a few pertinent things about the author of *Pickpocket,* especially how Bresson's latter films—*L'Argent* and *The Devil Probably*—relate to his earlier output.

Michel Estève, *Le Pouvoir en Question,* Editions du Cerf, 29 boulevard de Latour-Maubourg, 75007 Paris. Estève, better known as a specialist on Robert Bresson, has attempted here to confront the concept of human dignity as it is presented in the work of such authors as Ruy Guerra, Andrzej Wajda, Lino Brocka and Miklos Jancsó. An original work.

Robert Florey, *Deux Ans dans les Studios Américains,* Editions d'Aujourd-hui, 83120 Plan-de-la-Tour. Florey, before going on to direct the Marx Brothers in *Coconuts,* was a well-known French journalist who came to Hollywood originally to cover the early days of the American film industry. This book, first published in 1926 and republished here for the first time, is a compendium of Florey's articles, and because of its depth and its insight is definitely one of the fundamental works of the pre-sound US film. Highly recommended.

Jean A. Gili, *La Comédie italienne,* Veyrier, 12 rue de Nesle, 75006 Paris. Gili is one of the leading French specialists of the Italian film and here has put together a volume which is as well illustrated as it is original in its approach to a genre, the Italian comedy film, that is not well known in the United States.

Jean A. Gili, *le Cinéma italien,* vol. 2, Collection 10/18, 8 rue Garancière, 75006 Paris. A low-priced volume of interviews with major figures in Italian film.

André Goudreault, *le Cinéma des premiers temps (1900–06),* Cahiers de la Cinémathèque, Palais des Congres, 66000 Perpignan. On the first years of the cinema, especially in the United States, with interesting sections on E. S. Porter and Biograph.

Jean Hugo, *le Regard de la memoire, 1914–46,* Actes-Sud, distributed by Presses universitaires de France, 90 boulevard Saint-Germain, 75005 Paris. Memoirs of the grandson of Victor Hugo, who was a celebrated designer of theatrical sets, but also of those for such films as Jean Cocteau's *Beauty and the Beast.*

Images pour un film. Les decors d'Enki Bilal pour la Vie est un roman d'Alain Resnais, Editions Dargaud, 12 rue Blaise-Pascal, 92201 Neuilly-sur-Seine. Dargaud, better known as the publisher of such celebrated French comic strips as *Lucky Luke,* has produced a handsome album containing, in color, the sketches drawn by Enki Bilal for the sets in Alain Resnais's last film.

Institut Lumière, *Claude Autant-Lara* and *le Dessin animé français,* two volumes in the "Premier Film" collection published by the Institut Lumière, rue du Premier-Film, Lyon. Monographs, heavily illustrated.

Jean-Pierre Jeancolas, *Quinze Ans d'annees 30. le Cinema français des Français, 1929–1944,* Editions Stock, 14 rue de l'Ancienne-Comédie, 75006 Paris. Jeancolas has an interesting thesis, that French cinema of the Occupation years (1940–44) actually is an extension of the thirties cinema rather than a reaction to it.

Raymond Lacombe, *Nazisme et seconde guerre mondiale dans le cinéma d'espionnage,* Veyrier, 12 rue de Nesle, 75006 Paris. One of the better books of the year, this one is notable for the precision of its thought, the concision in its writing and the thoroughness of its analysis.

R. Leprohon, *Histoire du cinéma muet* (1895–1930), Editions d'Aujourd'hui, 83120 plan-de-la-Tour. Long out of print, this book, originally published in 1961, now reappears under the imprint of Editions d'Aujourd'hui, a reprint publisher that has already issued several dozen film titles, among them Claude Chabrol's and Eric Rohmer's *Hitchcock.* The importance of their back list is such that it is worth writing for their catalogue.

Madeleine Malthête-Méliès, *Méliès et la naissance du spectacle cinématographique: Colloque de Cérisy, Août A981,* distributed by Librairie des Meridiens, 11 rue de Lille, 75007 Paris. Another notable contribution to Méliès scholarship, again under the direction of Madeleine Malthête-Méliès, granddaughter of Georges Méliès.

Leon Moussinac, *Naissance du cinéma,* Editions d'Aujourd'hui, 83120 Plan-de-la-Tour. Originally published in 1925, Moussinac's book is one of the first to look at the French cinema as art, especially as it was influenced by C. B. Demille's *The Cheat* and D. W. Griffith's *Intolerance,* among other masterpieces of the pre-World War I American cinema.

Marcel Oms, *le Cinéma des Années folles,* Cahiers de la Cinémathèque, Palais des Congres, 66000 Perpignan. On the relatively unknown formative years of French cinema: 1919–1929. Oms's approach, while scholarly (there is a filmography, and sections assessing the social and esthetic tendencies of films of this epoch), is also interesting; probably the most interesting section of the book are the interviews with some of the pioneers of the French film: Henri Fescourt, Gaston Modot and Joe Hamman. There is also an attempt to come to grips with the work of three seminal film-makers, little known in America: Germaine Dulac, Louis Delluc and Jean Epstein.

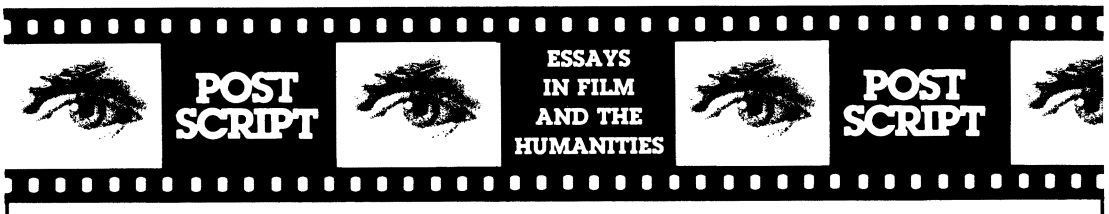
Marcel Oms, Pierre Roura, *Le Cinéma de l'Espagne franquiste,* Cahiers de la Cinémathèque, Palais des Congres, 66000 Perpignan. A very thorough examination of the Spanish film under Francisco Franco (1939–75), with some unusual revelations, especially the chapter: "Quand Abel Gance voulait travailler chez Franco."

Claude-Jean Philippe, *Le Roman du Cinéma, volume one: 1928–39,* Fayard, 75 rue des Saints-Pères, 75007 Paris. A well-written synthesis of the unfolding of the first ten years of the sound film. Philippe attempts to cover film developments around the world, but his forte, as one would expect, is the French cinema of the thirties. As his title might indicate, Philippe's book *reads* like a novel.

Politique des Auteurs, Editions du Seuil, 27 rue Jacob, 75006 paris. Collected together in one volume, the interviews by François Truffaut, Jacques Rivette, Jean-Luc Godard, Claude Chabrol, with Rossellini, Hawks, Hitchcock, Preminger, Renoir and Ophuls that originally appeared in *Cahiers du Cinéma,* and served as the basis of the French Nouvelle Vague's contention that a film should be the work of one man who would write his film in the same way an author would write a book.

René Predal, *le Cinéma français contemporain,* Editions du Cerf, 29 boulevard Latour-Maubourg, 75007 Paris. Although many volumes have appeared claiming to deal with the contemporary French cinema, this is the first one that actually manages to come to grips with its subject.

Jean Renoir, *Lettres d'Amérique,* Presses de la Renaissance, 198, boulevard Saint-Germain, 75007 Paris. Presented by Dido Renoir, Jean Renoir's scriptgirl, later his wife, and annotated by Alexander Sesonske, the leading American Renoir specialist, this volume is very hard to put down; although it does not add very much to other works on the cinema of Jean Renoir, it does show how much Renoir was a born writer, one who according to his correspondence, wanted very badly to abandon the cinema in order to write full time. In this correspondence, which emanates from his California exile during the years of 1941–49, one nevertheless gets a flavor



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of what it was like to have to make films in Hollywood of the forties.

Eric Rohmer, *Le Goût de la Beauté,* Cahiers du Cinéma/Editions de l'Etoile, distributed by Editions du Seuil, 27 rue Jacob, 75006 Paris. A selection of the several hundred articles written by Rohmer, formerly Maurice Scherer, during the forties and fifties.

Jean-Paul Sartre, *Freud, le Scénario,* Gallimard, 5 rue Robert-Estienne, 75008 Paris. Sartre's screenplay for John Huston's 1956 film that starred Montgomery Clift, it bears little resemblance to the final film. Sartre has apparently let it be known that Huston was, of all his collaborators, the most difficult.

Roland Schneider, editor, *Cinéma allemand,* Editions du Cerf, 29 boulevard Latour-Maugourg, 75007 Paris. Done in conjunction with the film magazine *Cinémaction,* this is a thoroughly done panorama of German cinema that is heavily illustrated, contains a listing of the principal authors of German cinema, and a 600-title index.

Daniel Serceau, *Mizoguchi; de la revolte aux songes.* Editions du Cerf, 29, boulevard Latour-Maubourg, 75007 Paris. One of the few auteur-oriented volumes to have been produced in France this year, this one is done by Daniel Serceau who did a remarkable sociopolitical study two years ago of the work of Jean Renoir. His book on Mizoguchi is on the same level; it is also well-illustrated.

François Truffaut, *Hitchcock: Edition definitive,* Editions Ramsay, 9 rue du Cherche-Midi, 75006 Paris. With a new introduction, an epilogue that examines the twenty years that went uncovered in the original book, and more illustrations than the original French and American editions of this book, Truffaut's book was timed for the French re-release of *Rear Window* and *Vertigo,* and tends to explain and justify the success of those reissues.

P. S. Vieyra, *le Cinéma au Senegal,* OCIC, 8 rue de l'Orme, B-1040 Brussels. Number four in a series that now covers the major Black African film-producing states, which eventually will be extended to Asia and Latin America.

Olivier René Veillon, *le Cinéma américain, les années 50,* Editions du Seuil, 27 rue Jacob, 75006 Paris. The first of a series, this one covers 1945–60, is in dictionary form, and contains a filmography of 31 principal American directors.

Christian Zimmer, *le Retour de la Fiction,* Editions du Cerf, 29, boulevard Latour-Maubourg, 75007 Paris. Based on some articles he has done for *Les Temps modernes,* Zimmer's book puts forth the interesting theory that the "return" of world cinema to the "fiction" film took place about 1978, and that the militant cinema that preceded it lasted as long as did the American involvement in Vietnam. "L'Histoire eprouve le besoin de souffler," he says, "de faire une pause."

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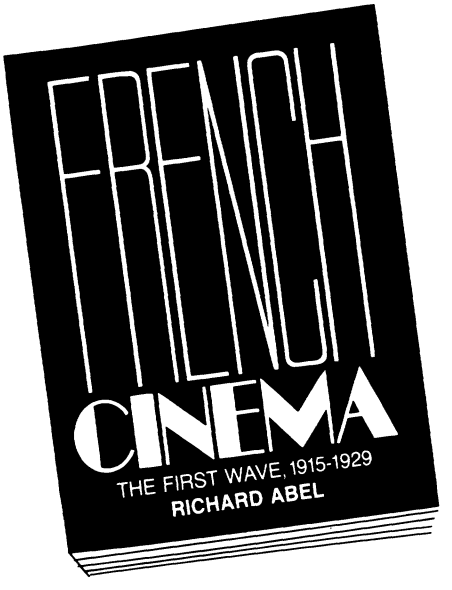

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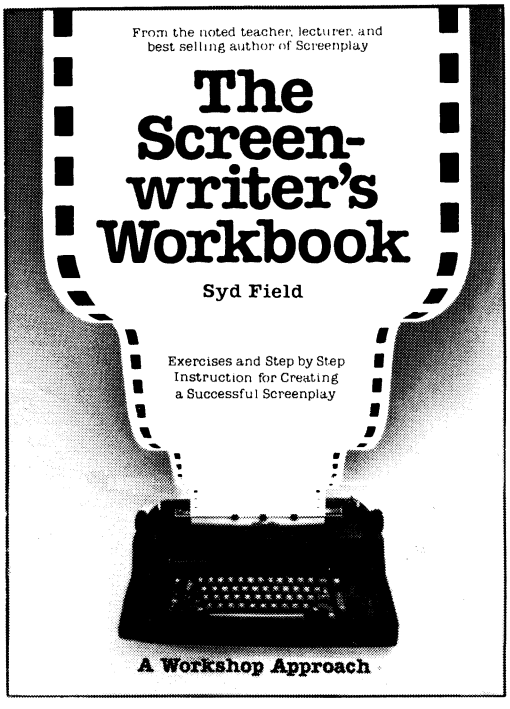

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